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THE AUSTRALIAN PC ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

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MDK

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PERFECT GAMEPLAY**

48 JOYSTICKS
PLAYTESTED

QUAKE

2 NEW MISSION PACKS

- Battlecruiser 3000AD
- Magic: The Gathering
- Ecstatica 2

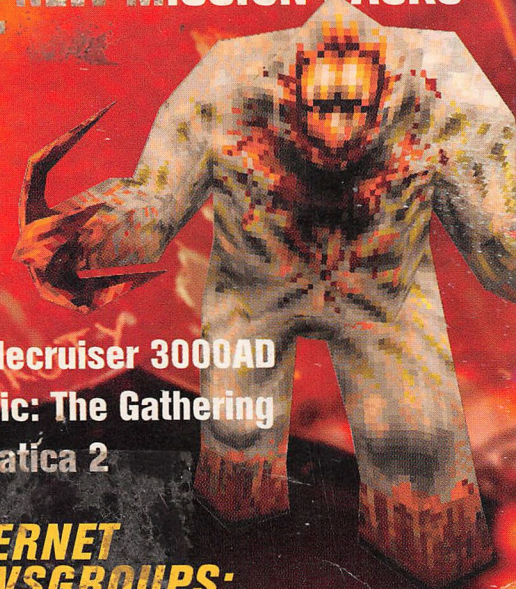
**INTERNET
NEWSGROUPS:**
Share your opinion
with the world



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On this month's CD:
ECSTATICA 2

Archimedean Dynasty
Privateer 2
Stars!
plus lots more...

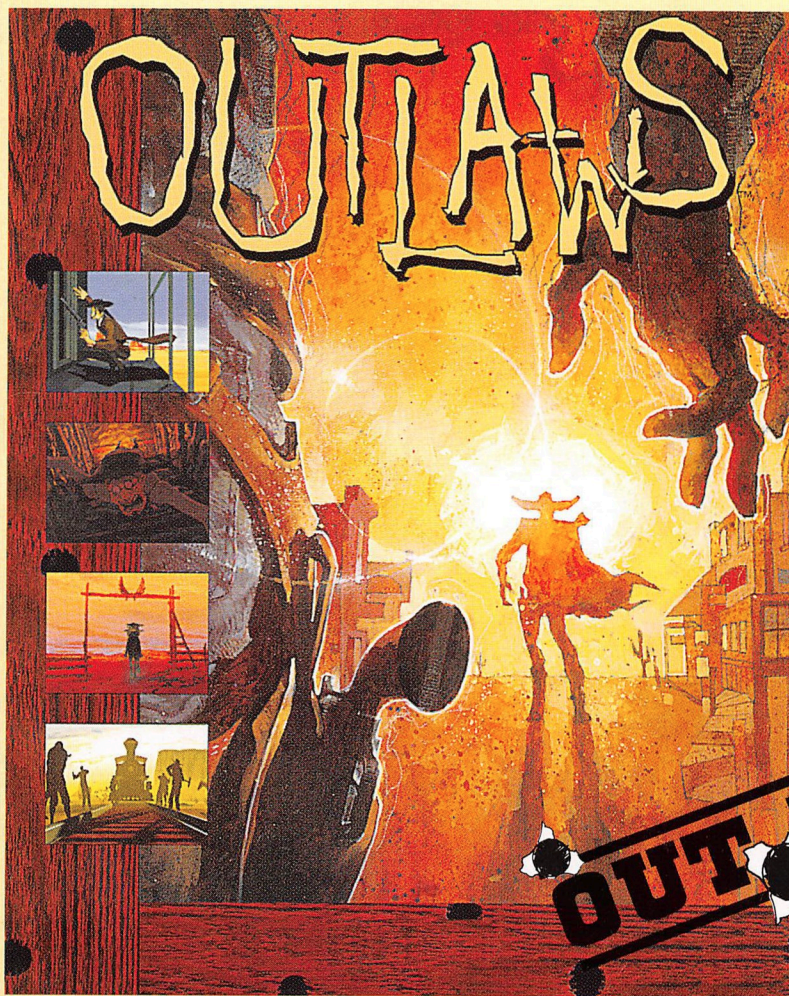


ISSUE 12 May 1997

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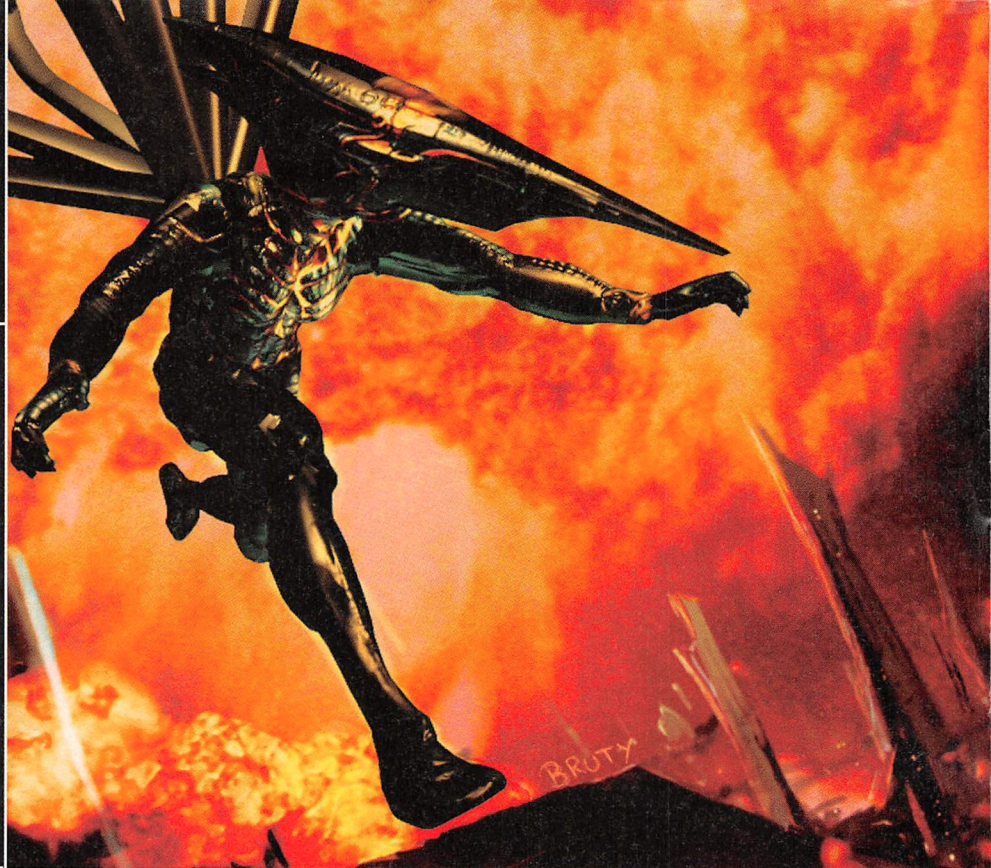
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PC POWERPLAY

ISSUE

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MAY 1997



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What we're playing: FIFA 97, Master of Orion 2, Quake,
Stars!, Transport Tycoon, Death Rally, MacQuake hack,
Super Mario Kart 64, Raystorm.

Editorial

Hey everybody, look at us! How new and improved can you get?! Our meteoric rise to magazine superfabulousness has resulted in the weighty tome/thing of beauty you hold in your hands. Our new format has a slightly different size: it's taller and skinnier (like us, really) than before, while the paper is a little heavier and thicker (like us...) for two reasons - it holds darker ink better, so our screenshots look more like what you'll see on your monitor, and hell, it just feels right. The most obvious change though, is the use of Perfect Binding (that's the flat spine instead of the staples of old). Now you can file your PowerPlays neatly and for easy reference. Good eh! Inside too, we've been messing around with PowerPlay. Not so much that you'd hate us for changing, so we've re-arranged the order things happen in so it's all a bit more sensible. We're big on sensible, you see.

But enough about us... This month's collection of game reviews is a killer. All the big Christmas titles which (predictably) slipped have finally turned up: MDK, Theme Hospital, Terminator: Skynet - even Battle Cruiser 3000AD and Magic: The Gathering actually got released. Amazing.

This issue also saw us playtest every joystick and controller on the market. Yes, we actually plugged each one in and gave it the once-over. Tiring stuff, but we now know what sucks and what doesn't - and you will too, which can only be a good thing. Have fun!



Ben

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Censorship rears its ugly head again, Combat Flight Sims set to take off, Australian online games come of age and special news reports from the U.K. And U.S.

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Save big \$\$ and win stuff instead of buying it!

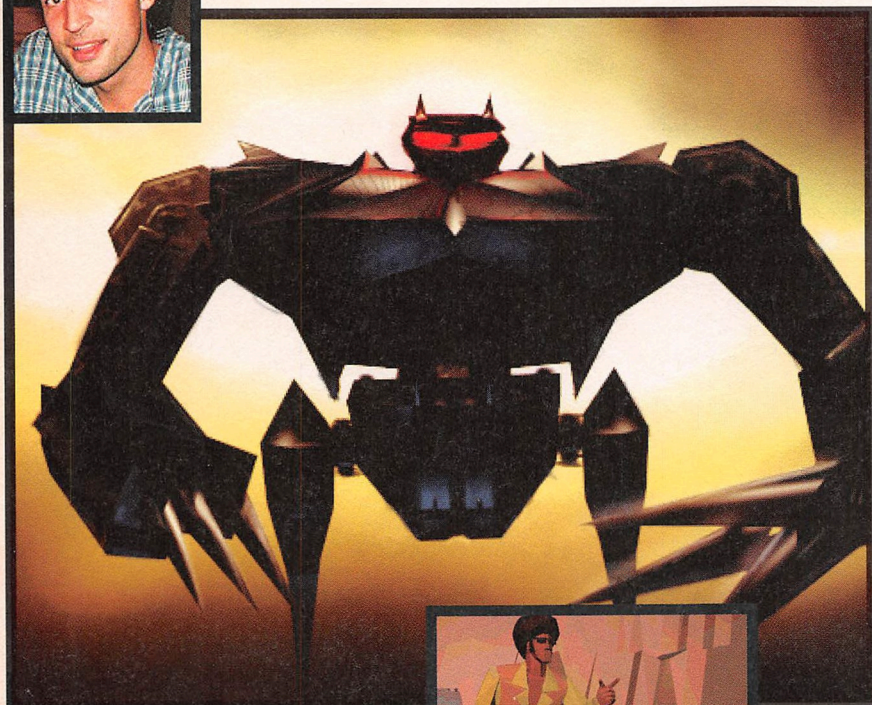
PREVIEWS 20

Blood reprises the Duke 3D engine, Riverworld forges an exiting new genre, PC Legacy of Kain improves on the Playstation title and Dragon Dice is a bog-standard medieval strategy game - a good thing!



INTERVIEW: DAVE PERRY 26

Mr Earthworm Jim, the Console King jumps the fence and gives the PC world the amazing MDK.



REVIEWS 32

A truly HUGE month of games:

MDK
Battle Cruiser 3000AD
Ecstatica 2
2 Quake Mission Packs!
City of Lost Children
Theme Hospital
Magic: The Gathering - Acclaim
Magic: The Gathering - MicroProse
Terminator: Skynet
Formula 1 3Dfx
Air Warrior II

Microfiles: Warcraft 2: The Next 70 Levels, NCAA Final Four '97, Norse by Norsewest, Ultimate Soccer Manager 2, 3rd Reich, Yoda Stories, Golf Pro 2000, SlamTilt, Cave Wars, Settlers 2 mission disk, Over The Reich, Noir.



JOYSTICKS: THE BIG TEST 68

Our exhaustive test will help you choose a winner instead of a dud.



3D TECHNEWS 77

3D accelerators have revolutionised PC gaming. This regular section looks at the latest exciting developments.



HOTWARE 80

The Sound Blaster AWE 64 Gold fully tested, multimedia speakers that actually deliver the goods, new Net PC, science gone mad: Creative Infra-red CD ROM with remote control!

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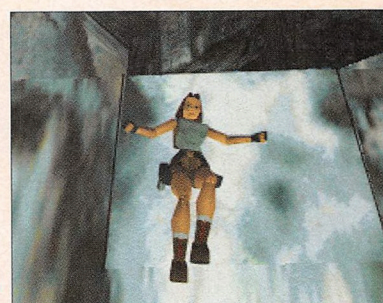
Take a break from competitive rivalry with Castle Infinity and Koala Lumpur.

TECH.TXT 86

Netscape Navigator vs. Internet Explorer - we decide so you won't have to.

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Q & A for the technically-challenged among us.



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Q & A for the gaming-challenged among us.

CODE 93

Cheat codes for dishonest incompetents.

WEBSTALK 94

This month: the Usenet. We look at Newsgroups - the most heated, opinionated gaming discussion happens here and you can join in the fun!

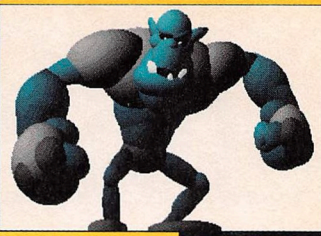
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What you wrote to us about.

FLASHBACK 98

Warlords 2 revisited - gosh darn, how we love the old clunker.

CD GUIDE



Games are really good fun.

CD Tech

Win 95

Running the Powerplay CD under Win 95 is best. All the games will appear on the menu and run, whether Win 95 or DOS.

CLICK ON THE POWERWIN ICON

DOS

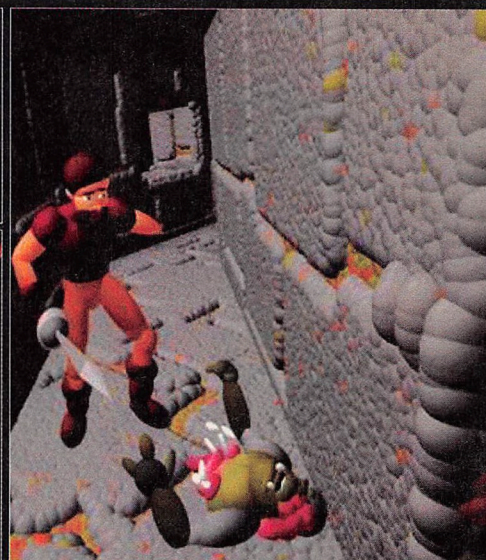
Around half the games are DOS. The Powerplay DOS menu will only show DOS games

TYPE PCPOWER AT THE CD PROMPT (PROBABLY D:)

Win 3.1x

Some games will run under Win3.1x. The Powerplay menu won't work under Win3.1x, so run them straight from the CD with File Manager

RUN STRAIGHT FROM CD



Archimedean Dynasty

Archimedean Dynasty places you on a future underwater world. You're a mercenary, with a sub and a sinister plot to unfold. Well, in this demo, you'll only get as far as chapter 1, so there's not too much unfolding. Consider this a cross between Privateer and Subwar 2050.

System requirements: Pentium, Windows 95, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard

This game supports a Joystick.

ESC = Quit program

F1 = Status of the fixed cannon on monitor / Toggle weapon status

F2 = Status of the torpedo magazine on monitor / Toggle weapon status

F3 = Status turret cannon 1 (if mounted) / Toggle weapon status

F4 = Status turret cannon 2 (if mounted) / Toggle weapon status

F5 = Command to turret cannon 1: Attack my target

F6 = Command to turret cannon 1: Fire simultaneously with me

F7 = Command to turret cannon 1: Locate targets and attack independently

F8 = Command to turret cannon 1: No further action (default)

F9 = Command to turret cannon 2: Attack my target

F10 = Command to turret cannon 2: Fire simultaneously with me

F11 = Command to turret cannon 2: Locate targets and attack independently

F12 = Command to turret cannon 2: No further action (default)

a = Accelerate. Remains activated while key is depressed

z = Decelerate. Remains activated while key is depressed

s = Increase speed by 10km/h

x = Decrease speed by 10km/h

q = Active sonar on/off

i = Display armour state in monitor

r = Change radar range (circular displays bottom left and right)

f = Activate free control

g = Activate ground control

h = show help screen

j = Activate ceiling control

l = Lock object in target range

y = Autopilot menu

p = Pause function

u = Turret cannons selection/commands

c = Stop boat at once

n = Select next way point

o = Capture screen to 24bit TGA picture (about 1MB in size!!!!)

ALT = Fire torpedo

SPACE = Fire onboard cannon

RETURN = Select next torpedo

CRSC-UP = Ship control, nose down

CRSC-DOWN = Ship control, nose up

CRSC-LEFT = Ship control, left turn

CRSC-RIGHT = Ship control, right turn

Battle of the Bulge

No, not a weight loss simulator but the famous World War II Battle that pitted the Allied nations vs the Axis nations.

This is a wargame simulator for all the pitting young generals out there.

System requirements: 486, 8Mb RAM, Win 95, Soundcard. This game is controlled by mouse.



Ecstatica 2

Ecstatica, a unique adventure game in the vein of Alone in the Dark. Ecstatica was revolutionary because of its use of filled circles as opposed to polygons to render its objects very quickly. Now Ecstatica 2 follows on utilising beautiful gouraud shading and spherical objects, all without a 3D accelerator. It's like a bit of Relentless, a touch of Tomb Raider, a spoon full of Alone in the Dark and a lot of fun.

System requirements: 486, 8Mb RAM, Soundcard

This game supports a Joystick/Gamepad

Up = Up

Down = Down

Left = Left

Right = Right

With CTRL held down

Up = Strike

Down = Massive Reverse Strike

Left = Slash

Right = Kick

With ALT held down

Up = Jump Forward

Down = Back flip

Left = Roll Left

Right = Roll Right



Harpoon Online

Win95

If you were a fan of the very popular Naval strategy game Harpoon but craved the challenge of other like-minded Admirals, then Harpoon Online is your dream come true. Harpoon Online allows you to challenge multiple opponent fleets over the Internet. See the readme and associated help file for play information.

System requirements: 486, 8Mb RAM, Win 95, Soundcard, 28,800 Internet Connection

This is a Windows 95 game and is therefore controlled using the mouse.

Jack Nicklaus Golf

Win95

No, not another golf game, a golf course designer. If you've ever been popping a few down the local course and thought "This sucks, I could design a much better course" then now you can. You can even move a Virtual Camera around and photograph it to show your mates.

System requirements: Pentium, 16Mb RAM, Win 95, Soundcard.

This application is controlled with the mouse.

Muppet Treasure Island

Win

Although Muppet Treasure Island was designed for the younger folk, as were the original Muppets, they're still top value no matter what the age. But hey, if you don't like the Muppets, this demo allows you to cream a few of them. Top fun for all. **System requirements:**

486, 16Mb RAM, Win 95 or Win 3.1, Soundcard. This is a Windows game and is controlled using the mouse.

Left/Right Cursors - Indicate that you can move to the scene to the immediate left or right of the scene you are in.

Forward/Backward Cursors - Indicate that you can move forward into or backward (out of) the scene you are in.

Hotspot Cursor (Hand with index finger extended) - Indicates a hotspot where you can see something happen or view a Muppets video clip.

Spacebar = Skips past audio, video and animation clips.

Alt-F4 = Quits the Game

Shivers 2

Win95

Shivers 2 is the latest offering from Sierra and the second offering in the Shivers range. Sort of like a more mature Goosebumps, Shivers 2 is an adventure set within a horror theme. A first for Sierra, it utilises a QuickVR spin around presentation style like Zork Nemesis.

System requirements: Pentium, Windows 95, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard.

This game is controlled using the mouse.

Use your mouse or arrow keys to look around. You can get close-ups by clicking on certain objects. To quit, press the Esc key.

F2 = change resolution

F3 = turn captioning on and off.

F4 = turn off "hot" cursor off. The "hot" cursor indicates what you can click on. Press again to turn on.

F5 = reduce the movie screen. Press it again to return to the original size.

Simcity 2000 Online

Win95

In SimCity 2000 a player took on the role of a super-mayor, the online version has multiple players acting as city commissioners. Now you have to make



decisions such as issuing bonds, instituting pollution controls or increasing the school budget. The twist however is that everything must be voted on and agreed to collectively. A chat feature allows players to hold town meetings or strike back-room political deals to share city resources. New features include players having to purchase land before they can develop it. As they build their real-estate empires, they can buy up valuable waterfront property or purchase land to block another player's highway system. Keep in mind however that it is to everyone's benefit to build a successful and thriving city. Only then will property values and tax revenues increase. Think twice before building a new nuclear power plant next to an opponent's favourite suburb.

System requirements: Pentium, Windows 95, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard, 28,800 Internet Connection.

This game is controlled using the mouse.



Sonic and Knuckles

Win95

The latest release in Sega's PC range, the popular Sonic has teamed up with a young impetuous fox (What other kind are there?). Although this could be described as a standard horizontally scrolling platformer, the Sonic ones tend to be more dynamic and filled with lots of hidden areas. Enjoy.

System requirements: Pentium, 16Mb RAM, Windows 95, Soundcard.

This game is controlled using the mouse.

Left = Move Left

Right = Move Right

Up = Look up

Down = look down

Enter = Jump & Attack (push [Enter] during jump for Special Attack)

Down +hold Enter = Sonic spins. Release [Enter] to dush.

Enter = Game Start

Alt+F4 = Quit Game

F3 = Pause

F4 = Full Screen On/Off

F5 = Menu Bar On/Off

F7 = Change Controls

F8 = Use Joystick

Stars!

Win95

Stars is one of the most talked about games on the Net. There are those that absolutely obsess over it to the point of spamming about it in Usenet like some bizarre religion. Stars! also came up as a point of topic recently, as to whether it was better than Masters of Orion 2 or not.

The major advantage Stars has over Masters of Orion 2 is that it can be played over the net with a vast number of players.

System requirements: 486, 8Mb RAM, Windows 95, Soundcard, 28,800 Internet Connection.

This is a Windows 95 game and is controlled using the mouse.

F1 = Open this Players Guide.

F2 = Open the Technology Browser.

F3 = First press opens the Planet Summary Report.

Second press opens your Fleet Summary Report.

Third press opens the Others Fleet Summary Report.

Fourth press opens the Battle Report.

Fifth press closes the report window.

F4 = Open the Ship Design dialog.

F5 = Open the Research dialog.

F6 = Open the Battle Plans dialog.

F7 = Open the Player Relations dialog.

F8 = Open the View Race dialog.

F9 = Generate a new turn, immediately.

F10 = Display your score.

1-6 = Change the Scanner view:

Normal (1)

Surface Mineral (2)

Mineral Concentration (3)

Planet Value (4)

Population (5)

No Player Info (6).

7, 8, 9, 0, SHIFT-0 = Toggles these Scanner overlays:

Radar Coverage (7)

Mine Fields (8)

Fleet Paths (9)

Planet Names (0)

Ship Count (SHIFT-0)

Esc = Closes the displayed report.

CTRL F = Find a planet or fleet in the Scanner.

+ / - = The plus (+) key zooms in the Scanner.

The minus (-) key zooms back out.

Up = displays the previous message in the Messages pane.

Down = displays the next message.

Home / End = Display the first and last messages in the Messages pane.

Enter = Go from the Messages pane to the related dialogue or location

Backspace / Delete = Deletes the selected waypoint.

p / n = Displays the previous or next planet or fleet in the Command pane.

P / N = Displays the previous or next planet with a starbase in the Command pane.

q = Opens the Production dialogue.

v = Find your location in the Scanner pane.

f = Displays your fleet or planet with the lowest ID number in the Command pane. If the fleet is already selected the planet is displayed, and vice versa.

, = Decreases the selected fleets warp speed to the current waypoint by one.

. = Increases the selected fleets warp speed to the current waypoint by one.

Starfleet Academy

DOS Win95

Starfleet Academy is one of the most anticipated games of 1997. If you're bold enough, check out this demo to learn why.

System requirements: 486, 8Mb RAM, Soundcard.

ZPC

Win95

You're alone against insurmountable odds. Just you and a series of weapons in an effort to find your exit to freedom, all in a 1st person perspective. That is to say - Doom Clone. Still, this one does run well Under Windows 95 using Direct X at 640 x 480.

System requirements: Pentium, 16Mb RAM, Windows 95, Soundcard.

This games supports a Joystick/Gamepad, Mouse and Keyboard

Up = Forward

Down = Backwards

Left = Left

Right = Right

Glance Left = A

Glance Right = S

Look up = D

Look Down = C

Look Ahead = V

Previous Weapon = Page Up

Next Weapon = Page Down

Fire = Ctrl

Sidestep = W

Run/Swim = Caps Lock

Look = Q

Action = Spacebar

Map = TAB

Netzone

DOS

Cool action fun in this "VR" style demo from Gremlin. Check out the README for more info.

System requirements: Pentium, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard.

This games supports a Joystick/Gamepad.

Guimo

DOS Win95

You play Guimo, a, umm thing from the planet Necterion off to save his friends on the planet Deekore, from an evil emperor and his devastator army. To help you are the ahem, Eggy Robots, power ups with powerful but clumsy weaponry.

System requirements: 486, 8Mb RAM, Soundcard.

This games supports a Joystick.

Up = Up

Down = Down

Left = Left

Right = Right

Jump = Alt

Fire = space bar

Invoke Friend = Down and space simultaneously or left Ctrl.

Photo-Pause = p

InGame Graphic Detail = F1

Norse by Norsewest

Win95

Cute puzzle/platforming sequel to The Lost Vikings. Swap control between the different vikings to overcome obscales.

See the help menu for instructions.

System requirements: 486, 8Mb RAM, Soundcard.

This games supports a Joystick/Gamepad.



Privateer 2

DOS Win95

Privateer 2 is the excellent follow on to one of Origin's most popular, and the best thing to come out of the wing Commander Universe, Privateer. In Privateer 2, the emphasis is placed more on the overall story within your neck of the Universe, but still boasts brilliant playability in dogfights. Check out the super fast 3D in this game.

System requirements: Pentium, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard.

This game supports a Joystick/Gamepad.

[ESC] : Bypass Current Movie

[ALT-X] : Exit the Demo

Once spaceflight is accessed, press [ALT-H]. This will bring up a list of all the commands for spaceflight. A few helpful commands are listed below :

Access Help Screen = ALT H

Access Navigation Map = ALT N

Activate Jump Engine = J

Target Closest Enemy = W

Afterburner = TAB

Toggle Radar Types = ALT R

Fire Missile = Enter

Access Diary = ALT D

Access Options Screen = ALT O

BUY/SELL

CURRENT SHIP
CURRENT SHIP VALUE
CREDITS
TOTAL CREDITS

Straith
10,000
3,500
13,500

SHIPS

COST

Faldari

160,000

Faldari Mk II

125,000

Freij

180,000

Straith

10,000

Velacia

20,000

Straith

MAX SPEED

AGILITY

SHIELDS

ARMOUR

GUN MOUNTS

MISSILE MOUNTS

MODULE MOUNTS



Fork in the Tale

Win95

Fork in the Tale is a new full "Interactive Movie" featuring the voice of Rob Schneider (no, we don't know who he is either!). This interactive movie however, might just do justice to this rather tired genre as it tries to entertain through humorous wit and pretty good acting. Check out this demo and see for yourself.

In the short playable part, when the enemy goes to punch you, click on one of the pop up icons to do the appropriate action.

System requirements: Pentium, Win 95 16Mb RAM,

Soundcard, Quad Speed CDROM

This game is controlled with the mouse.

Blood and Magic

DOS Win95

Blood and Magic is a unique mix of Real time strategy with level built in puzzle solving. A most intriguing mix. You are a mage that must summon different elementals based on the pooling of mana. For gameplay help, see the readme.txt and follow the in game tutorial.

System requirements: 486, 8Mb RAM, Soundcard

This game supports a Joystick

? = info cursor

m = move to command

a = attack command

g = guard command

s = use skill or spell

t = transform follower

r = remove follower

i = use item

d = drop item

e = encyclopedia

v = victory and defeat conditions

p = freeze action

Enter = go see message event

Tab = cycle to next follower

Esc = exit mode / options menu

Ctrl+LeftClick = repeat command to follower

Utilities

The Confirmator: The Confirmator was designed to provide you with an option that Microsoft left out of Windows '95: automatically confirm file, folder, menu item, or icon deletion! Just place this program into your StartUp folder. The Confirmator will run invisibly (after a few seconds) and watch for any Windows '95 dialog boxes asking you to confirm deletion. The Confirmator will immediately hit <ENTER> whenever such a confirmation box appears, thereby saving you time and effort.

F-Prot: F-Prot is an anti Virus program by Frisk Software. With the ability to recognise thousands of Viri through it's scanning ability.

Mcafee Virus Scan V3.0: Grab the latest Version of Virus Scan with these nifty new functions. Highest level of virus detection rates in the industry as well as fast scanning performance with a 32-bit, multithreaded code. An Emergency Disk creation utility. ScanPM is now included with VirusScan for Windows 95. ScanPM is a command-line scanner with a reduced conventional memory footprint that operates in protected mode command-line environments such as DOS. Support for Microsoft Office97. Detects and removes the LAROUX Excel macro virus.

Showcase MPG-Net: MPG Net is a new Online Gaming business allowing you to play people from all over the world. MPG has these services and games on offer. The Kingdom of Drakkar, (New) IPX Simulator, (New) Public IPX Network, (New) Backgammon, Operation Market Garden, Minion Hunter, Empire Builder, Imperium, Role Playing Rooms, E-mail, Forums

to post public messages, Pubs where you can enjoy real-time conversations with other players. Realtime conversations - what a concept!

Tray Day: TrayDay places an icon showing the date (day of the month) in the system tray (the part of the taskbar which includes the clock). The icon resembles a page of a "tear-off" calendar.

You can therefore see the date at a glance - often quicker and easier than resting your mouse over the clock, searching for an "Insert Date" menu, or having to reach for your diary. Move the mouse over the icon and the day of the week will appear.

Patches

Tomb Raider 3Dfx patch (Awesome!), A to Cuba (Activision), Age of Sail, NBA Full Court Press, Battle Cruiser 3000 C2 and C3 patch, Battleground Ardennes 1.30, Blood and Magic 1.01, Capitalism 1.1, Command and Conquer 1.22p, Close Combat 1.0a, Sim Copter 1.01, Descent 2 Virge update, Dagerfall, Descent 2 Verite, Jagged Alliance, Drowned God, Duke Nukem, F-22, Free Enterprise, Fire Fight 1.1, Harpoon Classic 97, Indycar 2, Leisure Suit Larry 7, Madden 97, M.A.X., Mech Warrior 2 Mercenaries, Flight Simulator 5, Nemesis, Quake, Quake Developers Kit, Radix, Shattered Steel, Star General, Titanic, Warcraft, Warwind, Wing Commander 4 for Win 95, Whiplash to 3D Blaster, Wooden Ships and Iron Men, Xwing Floppy Disk Version

DOS TROUBLESHOOTING

The most likely cause of any problem is a shortage of conventional memory. This has nothing to do with how much RAM is on your system, but how it's set up. To find out how much is available for the games, type MEM /CIMORE. Look for a line that reads LARGEST EXECUTABLE PROGRAM SIZE, if it's over 550k then everything should run. If it's under that figure, you'll need to edit your system files to sort it out.

The easiest way is to use the MAKE BOOT DISK facility found on most game installation menus. If you'd prefer not to do that, then you'll need to manually edit your two configuration files - the CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT.

To do so, type EDIT CONFIG.SYS and EDIT AUTOEXEC.BAT. In the CONFIG.SYS file, the most likely culprit is EMM386.EXE. You don't need it for the majority of games, so put REM at the start of the line. This will disable it. In the AUTOEXEC.BAT look to see if you are running SMARTDRV, if it's there, put REM at the start.

These two simple measures should overcome most problems. If you're still running short on conventional memory (the game should give you an error message telling you how much more you need), then a boot disk is the best solution.

THE PC POWERPLAY CD - The games on the CD are designed to be run in different ways. Some can be run straight from the disc, while others need to be installed. Games requiring installation will usually prompt you with a choice of where it will install to, so take note! Many of the games which run from the CD will only produce sound effects if you have a Sound Blaster compatible sound card set to default settings. That's 99% of you, so if you get no sound you're best copying the game to your hard drive, then running the setup program - usually INSTALL, SETUP, CONFIG or SOUNDSET. As with all problems PC, trial and error is the only true solution. Feel free to copy an entire game to your hard drive. All games are in the GAMES directory. Also copy a game from the CD if it mysteriously refuses to install. Then run the INSTALL file from the hard drive.

DISCLAIMER - All possible care is taken while selecting, testing and installing the software which is included on the PC PowerPlay CD. Next Publishing accepts no responsibility for data loss or other damage which may occur during its use. If your CD is clearly faulty, send it in for free replacement to:

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NSW 2012

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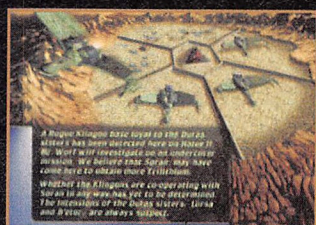
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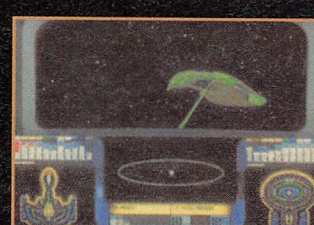
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THE NEWS

Flight sims take off again

Falcon 4.0 has been delayed again. For the last 6 months or so MicroProse have firmly stated that the most anticipated combat flight sim of all time

would be out "1st quarter 97". We queried this at the beginning of the year with MicroProse and were told that, yes, that meant the sim would be out "by June 30".

Supporting just about every 3D accelerator is a major reason for the delay, getting the game absolutely right is another. Remember, the original Falcon 3.0 quickly became famous as the most bug-ridden (and patched, bless 'em) game of them all. These screenshots from MicroProse show the stunning graphics we can expect... sometime.

In other flight sim news, the genre is finally crawling back to life after years of virtually nothing. Virgin Interactive have the Korean war based Sabre Ace due out about the same time as Falcon 4.0. This should be a serious "proper" sim, with realistic handling, as well as 3Dfx support. Virgin are toying with the idea of creating a series of Aces combat flight sims. Not deterred by the fact that Dynamix has been there and done that, Virgin are looking at a Phantom Ace sim and possibly an Eagle Ace.



Rowan's Flying Corp (PCPP #11, 76%) is looking like it may finally become the game it should have been to start with. The mother of all patches should be out by the time you read this. It'll fix just about everything - including the lack of a multiplayer feature, add support for the 3Dfx and MMX.

Team Apache from Eidos is nearing completion. This one has been on the release schedules forever but kept slipping... Now it looks like it'll be out soon and will support multiplayer and 3Dfx from the outset.

Eidos are working on another two flight sims - Confirmed Kill II and Flying Nightmares II. Like the original, Flying Nightmares II will have a strong strategy element and is one for hard-core sim fans. Online gamers will appreciate Confirmed Kill II's fully textured graphics, compared to other online sims which look pretty dismal (see Air Warrior II, reviewed p. 54).

Flight sims are coming alive again and even Microsoft are getting in on the act. Their WWII sim Fighter Ace will be up and running on their Internet Gaming Zone before the year is out.

Australian online games

Australian online game systems are coming up to speed and the scene is developing at a confident rate. Having local systems in place usually guarantees faster initial access and ping times, with the added bonus of knowing that most players are Aussies.

Three new online systems have just been launched, here's a rundown on what they offer:

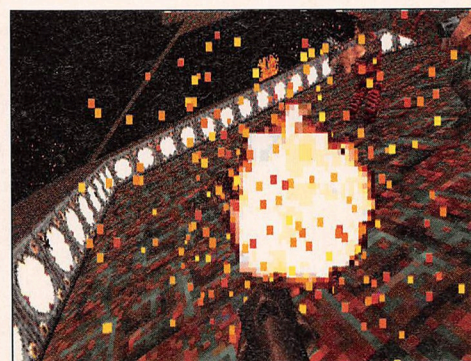
- **The Core** (<http://www.core.net.au>) is a Kali server run by prominent ISP Magna Data. Unlike lesser systems, The Core has tied in the support of the Australian games scene and is able to offer local game ladders for most popular games, as well as seriously attractive competitions. Directsoft has even put up a Pentium 200 as a prize for Sirtech's Deadly Games!

For those with their own Internet account, players can purchase a Kali registration from The Core for a one-off price of \$20, and for those with their own Kali registration & Internet account, they can purchase access to the Core and its competitions for just \$20 per month.

- **Multiplay** (<http://www.qzone.nf>) is the new incarnation of the old Qzone. Changes include an Australian Battle.net site for Diablo and Starcraft players. Multiplay has also been approached by Optus to trial their broadband delivery. And to cap it all off they have signed an affiliate agreement with the huge American online game service TEN. Aside from all these, Multiplay remains a Kali server. Multiplay hope to have several competitions underway soon, with a major Quake tournament where players will be ranked internationally.

- **Digital Underground** (<http://www.dug.com>) are a dedicated team of true gamers. Their server has great support areas and chatzones, as well as a respectable download area for patches and demos.

The main appeal though, is ease of use. Their startup kit contains everything you'll need and is a neatly integrated package. The site monitors all



active Quake servers which makes finding the fastest server for you effortless. A variety of fee structures are available. Unlimited access for just \$20 a month among them!

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THE NEWS

sidelines

VideoLogic have announced that development work is underway on the PowerVR's successor. As fast as the PowerVR is, the lack of bi-linear filtering is seen as a fatal flaw when viewed alongside 3Dfx and Verite based cards. Bi-linear filtering provides those beautiful textures in place of blocky pixels. The card is known provisionally as the PCX2.

Grey importing - unlicensed distribution of games, is now a risky business. After years of issuing warnings to offenders, the industry is finally getting tough. A number of successful prosecutions have already been before the courts and according to the Australian Visual Software Distributors Association's Megan Simes: "Anyone continuing to trade illegally can expect to go before the courts over the next few months".

After losing the rights to FASA's Mechwarrior property to Microprose, Activision have shrugged off the loss by simply picking up the rights to the Heavy Gear giant robot role-playing universe. The first Heavy gear title is expected by the end of 1997. It will be developed by the Mechwarrior team and will also use Mechwarrior's 3D engine.

It's the C&C "universe" now. Not content with absolute domination of the real-time strategy market, Westwood have gone for an action game to take back the online share it lost to Diablo. With just one unit to control, players will blast through up to 50 other online players in a world based on said C&C universe.

Tomb Raider 2 is on the way. Core Design have responded to criticism that their original title is just one good looking but empty room after another. The sequel will feature much more combat and some outdoor locations.

Mike Abrash, one of the talented programmers behind Quake, has left id. Abrash was originally poached from Microsoft by John Carmack, id's celebrity programmer. Abrash is heading back to Microsoft, but won't be working on games any longer.

In other Quake news, former CEO Jay Wilbur has a new job with id's rival, Epic Megagames. His title is "Imperial Advisor" (being a world famous mega-millionaire helps you get away with silly stuff like that) and promoting new Epic games such as the Quake-threatening Unreal.

Pax Imperia: Eminent Domain is still happening. After Blizzard dumped the sci-fi resource management game last year, new owners TH*Q have pressed on and hope to have the title out around July/August.

Computer Games Classification Guidelines Review

- Your chance to force a change

In 1994 the Government introduced legislation that required computer games to be classified. However, this move was more of a political knee jerk reaction to appear to be doing something about the general issue of violence in our society than it was about computer games influence. In fact, the government's own classification body, the Office of Film & Literature Classification (OFLC), commissioned research into computer games that found most, if not all, of the assumptions & anecdotes that were spewing forth from a group of Senators, were simply not supported by the findings.

Sadly, the government had already removed the 'R' category from the games classification guidelines and ordered that the classification of games be treated much more strictly than film & video.

Of course, these same Senators will tell you they called for public & industry opinions before they recommended such actions to the government, and they did. However, how many of you knew about it? How widespread did they advertise the fact? If you also read their subsequent report, you will find interesting the number of 'conservative' political, religious & community group responses they received.

You would also find interesting a number of their 'assumptions', particularly those that clearly had them believing only kids (non voters) played games, and, that the 'interactivity' involved in game playing meant they were more likely to cause harm to players!! These are people who wouldn't know a keyboard from a joystick, and they make the policy for a nation!

The bottom line is, if more people don't make their opinions known to these policy makers, we will increasingly find ourselves the victims of short sighted, ill researched policies. The bulk of gamers are adults, we have rights and powers, and should use them.

The government has agreed to 'review' the games guidelines, giving gamers & the industry the perfect

opportunity to retrieve the lost ground and put the record straight on many of those pathetic assumptions. The OFLC is not the place to direct your views to; they simply administer the policies. The Federal Attorney General and each State Attorney General are the responsible Ministers for censorship issues, and collectively

they decide what will happen to the classification legislation. While there is no actual date set for this review due to the fact there is an agreement to look at games only after a review of publication guidelines. This is not likely to occur until the end of 1997, meaning the games review will be in 98. Nothing happens quickly in government, except the introduction of the games legislation!

But, if gamers were to begin contacting their State Attorney General &



The consequences of the ongoing lack of an R rating are too horrible to contemplate.

the Federal Attorney General, and keep it up until the review begins, the government would have to introduce all those collected opinions into the review process. This time the fundamentalists & shortsighted Senators would be far less likely to have a 'like minded' majority set of opinions to push things their way once again.

Peter Mackay

Ex Senior Classifier for Computer Games with the OFLC



R18+?

Top Ten Games

Rank TITLE
Developer / Distributor

This	Last	
1	2	DIABLO
		Blizzard / Dataflow
2	-	KKND
		Beam / Electronic Arts
3	2	C&C RED ALERT
		Westwood / Sega Ozisoft
4	3	CRICKET '97
		EA / Sega Ozisoft
5	-	DIE HARD TRILOGY
		Fox Interactive / Electronic Arts
6	10	SEGA RALLY
		Sega / Sega Ozisoft
7	-	SCREAMER 2
		Milestone / Sega Ozisoft
8	7	C&C (ANNIVERSARY PACK)
		MicroProse / Sega Ozisoft
9	4	NEED FOR SPEED (SE)
		Electronic Arts / Electronic Arts
10	-	MAGIC THE GATHERING
		Microprose / Sega Ozisoft

Week ending 23rd March 1997.

The Acer best selling charts are carefully compiled from a sample panel of retailers selected across Australia including mass merchants, department stores, specialty software stores and independent outlets. Retailers surveyed include Myer Grace Bros., David Jones and John Martins, K Mart, Target, Big W, World 4 Kids, Harvey Norman Computer Super Stores, Blockbuster, Brashers, Video Games Heaven, and Games Wizards.

Charts supplied by Australian Computer Entertainment Review

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It's the time of the year in the UK where things start to move. After a really cold and snowy winter, yes those fluffy white bits, spring is here and things start to hot up.

Rumours (1) - Like A Virgin

There are so many rumours going around you wonder if any of them can be true - or is someone is just sitting around trying to fill some pages. Who would have thought that Virgin would be struggling a year ago but with nearly 50 percent of their staff moving on, it does appear that things are not running smoothly.

Fact

Two of the biggest multi media companies in the UK, if not Europe, have sacked nearly all their workers or have closed down. New Multimedia, who have an association with Rupert Murdoch, using his vast library of archive articles, closed their doors last week. The real truth is that Europe is saturated with multi media products and no one really cares a hoot about this interesting, but not worth digging into your pocket, software.

Rumour (2)

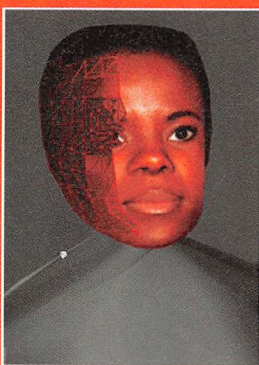
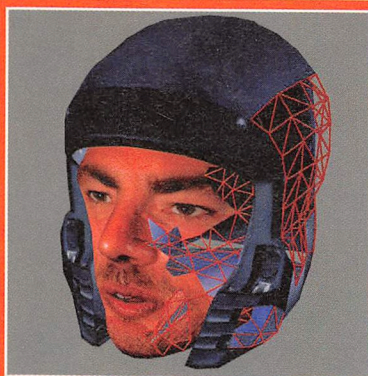
The latest rumour is that Eidos have overspent and major changes could be underway. With Acclaim and also Probe having financial problems, it makes you wonder what is going on. More inside gossip shortly!

Sound Thrills

Q. What's the latest new code the developers are talking about? A. It's Smacker - a new sound utility from the people that brought us Qsound. What makes it so neat is that it spools sound directly from a CD without any glitching and for anyone with a double speed drive or a low end machine this is good news!

Hot Scoop

Pepper's Ghost may not be a developer's name you would have heard of before, only being formed a short while ago. This company have many big plans and innovative ideas but in the ever changing world of technology, what gives a developer that edge? Pepper's Ghost have their own 3D technology which includes the most realistic 'avatars' as not only part of a game they are developing, called Burning Ambitions, but ones that will be encompassed within a Virtual World they are building for on-line internet users. Avatars, to the uninitiated, are 3D photo realistic models that they create to be totally human in looks and movement with their own personas, with full facial expressions and lip synching to name but a few features! The obvious progressive step on in game creation is, of course, to have characters that look real without using the standard FMV sequences. The question is whether Pepper's Ghost is going to be the first to present the most realistic life-like avatars within a totally compelling game. The answer is, yes. Seeing is believing and already George Michael has commissioned the company to make him an avatar of himself to go onto his new web site.

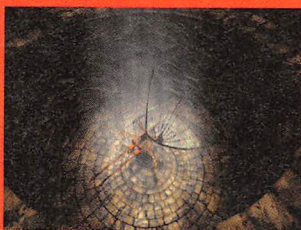


Seeing is Believing

With everyone trying to make the most life like characters within a game Cryo, the French development team that brought us Dune, are working on Omni - 3D to deliver some of the most technologically advanced graphics in animation in the world today... their words. The



first game to feature this engine is Atlantis: The Lost Tales, where you will get a panoramic 360 degree first person view with fluid movement and no loss of perspective. Whether your view sweeps from left to right, or up and down, the on screen response is quick and smooth, with spatial perspectives accurately represented. Omni 3D gives the user an unparalleled sense of immersion in a 3D rendered environment. It also gives greater freedom to both the user and to the game developer. The user enjoys the visual quality of pre-calculated 3D images in 640x480 (in 256 or 65,000 colours) but with the speed and



ease of movement of real time animation. For the game designers and developers, the Omni-3D technology gives a much broader scope of interactive options for adventure gaming: since objects can be hidden anywhere in the 3D environment, even in animated elements, gameplay can be significantly enhanced!

Scoop 2 - Boffin stuff.

If you do not know who William Latham is you are in good company for outside his circle of art friends and critics he may be relatively unknown, especially to video games players. William runs his own development team, Computer Artworks, and has recently had a program called Organic Art released on PC to much acclaim. Presently, he is involved in many deals including writing a game for Virgin called Evolver based around their Mutator engine, a clothing project with Daniel Poole (a very hip popular clubwear designer) putting the mutator technology on limited edition clothing and also a new 'Organicked' logo for the DTS (digital theatre sound) which will be in all DTS enhanced cinemas worldwide. His latest animated logo with sound can be viewed on films such as Star Wars and is a captivating 10 second trailer before a film showing organic art and sound in full glory. Add to this his involvement with the cover design for the Shamen and Robert Miles and contributing animation to the movie the Hackers, his track record is impressive. Evolver 2 will be one of the first games ever to have a full organic look and feel and William says it will shock many people. Also Organic 2 will feature art and sound so you have your own on computer light show, stick in any music CD and William's art will pulsate to the music!

Derek dela Fuente is a self described

42 year old miserable sod. He writes

for the leading gaming mags in

France, Germany, Spain, Italy etc.

He also writes for Sky 1 TV text pages.

Has a brother in Australia but has

not spoken to him for 20 years. So hi

Roy in Busby, NSW!



THE U.S. NEWS

Steven Dale Greenlee

Steven Dale Greenlee is an easily amused US based journalist and the former features editor of Computer Game Review magazine. Most recently he was the online editor for NUKE.com (now merged with gamespot.com). He has just found a marble and a piece of string which he devotes his time to when not writing about computer games.

Gurps Burps

Interplay have been developing a computer version of the popular pen and pencil RPG system called GURPS. This rich Generic Universal Role-Playing System has legions of loyal fans and was highly anticipated by many CRPG gamers. Well, Interplay, citing differences with GURPS creator Steve Jackson, decided to no longer use their license for GURPS Fallout and will now redo the RPG rules system that has been three years in the making.

From all accounts, Interplay had been thinking about ending their relationship with Steve Jackson after Jackson began vetoing design elements proposed by Interplay. Jackson did have contractual rights to veto what he didn't like, but apparently it was too much for Interplay. Now Fallout is being overhauled but Interplay doesn't dismiss the idea of doing another GURPS game. Interplay still owns the license, but this whole turn of events hasn't settled well with Jackson. It remains to be seen if he'll jump back into the design bed with Interplay.

This ain't your father's arcade

While the jury is still out to see if DreamWorks can produce hit adult computer games (even though Neverhood is a remarkable game) the mega-company has taken a step forward in computer gaming by opening the first state-of-the-art gaming/entertainment center in Seattle. Officially opened March 15, the gala event had performances from such notables as rocker Beck and rapper Coolio. Attending the opening were actors Gillian Anderson of the X-Files and Will Smith (Independence Day). This new hi-tech gaming wonderland boasts all manners and types of gaming including networked computer games and the latest in virtual reality.

GameWorks Seattle is only the first of a planned one hundred super-duper gaming centers that will be opened around the world in the next five years.

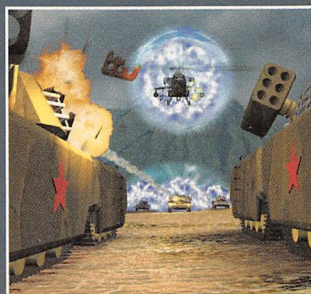
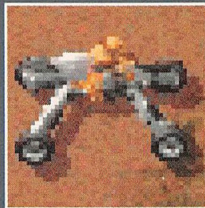


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In a move that surprised the U.S. gaming community, Ron Millar has jumped from Blizzard to do his own thing, which includes working with Activision on Dark Reign. Millar was Blizzard's senior game designer and worked on Warcraft II, Diablo and Starcraft. He is considered by all us know-it-alls as the driving creative force behind Blizzard's meteoric success. Now he will consult on the highly anticipated Dark Reign and will do new games with James Anhalt whom together have formed

Redline Games.

Apparently Millar leaves Blizzard on good terms and is talking up Starcraft as gamedom's next biggy. Although he does admit that Dark Reign is going to "rock" the industry. No word yet on what he will design for Redline Games but he hopes to be able to push the limits of game design. Oh, boy.



Red Alert!

There's new ground being ploughed in the legal world over computer game add-on packs from third party developers. id and GT have been battling Doom and Quake level add-ons as well as Duke Nukem 3D expansions. The latest round in this war concerns Head Games. They

made the expansion pack Defcon 3 for Command & Conquer Red Alert, but to avoid any additional court fights, Head Games has pulled the expansion pack until a U.S. court decides what to do in the case of GT Interactive versus Micro Star. Micro Star made the Duke Nukem add-on. Westwood, maker of C&C: Red Alert, of course says that the Defcon 3 add-on pack is an infringement upon their copyright.



First Quarter Lulls

In the last couple of years most game publishers have shifted their publishing schedules to accommodate the Christmas holidays. That means for the first half of the year there aren't too many games coming out, which maybe good news for the on-line gaming industry now struggling to get a financial foothold in the billion dollar gaming industry. Mplayer was one of the first to break rank and offer free gaming time. They still have some fee based services, but are now trying to go to an all advertising supported site. Just recently Mplayer says that their on-line gaming time has quadrupled with game play per month now being hovering around 100,000 hours. But there is stiff competition for the on-line gaming dollar as Blizzard's free Battle.net is wildly popular as well as VIE's free Subspace (at least for now). Who wants to pay when there are some good free sites?

And there are plans for at least a couple more free on-line gaming sites. For the next couple of years the battle for your on-line gaming dollar is going to be fierce, but fun to watch.

Ctrl>Alt>Del

There's still more news from the playground of game publishing. 7th Level has announced that game industry pioneer and company CEO George Grayson has resigned. The news was levelled by 7th Level co-founder and president Bob Ezrin. Why all this? Well, insiders aren't saying much except that money is probably at the root of it all, and 7th Level hasn't been making much lately. Their critically acclaimed Monty Python titles (Quest for the Holy Grail and Complete Waste of Time) didn't sell that well and neither did Ace Ventura: Pet Detective. In 1996 7th Level lost over \$25 million even though revenues were up.

Grayson, in a prepared comment, said that he was looking forward to doing more in education and "I wish the best for everyone at 7th Level." Grayson has already been replaced by board member Donald Schupak. Also resigning was chief operation officer David Henkel.

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As if that wasn't enough, Sierra will include full versions of Indycar Racing 2, Cyber Gladiators A-10 Silent Thunder and shareware Quake, with a patch for the full version for complete Rendition beautification.

You need one and here's how you can make it happen. Metro Games have supplied 4 Screamin' 3D cards to give away to PowerPlay subscribers and subscription renewers for the month of May. The winners will be drawn at the end of May, so get your subscription in!

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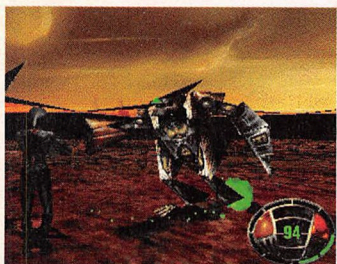
COMPETITION

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New Quake

New Quake is good, and there is new Quake. Reviewed in this very issue are the 2 new add-on packs: Mission Pack #1 and Dissolution of Eternity. We like them and so will you. Why not win one? Say that fast ten times and we'll send you one of each. Just kidding. Answer the question correctly and be one of the 6 names we draw and we really will send you one of each.

Q. What new monster is a dirty little thief?



MDK

MDK rocks. It's new, different and BIG fun. You'd know that if you'd read the review. Now win a copy. Interplay have given us 5 copies to give to you. Isn't that nice of them!

Q. Who is the boss of Shiny Entertainment?



Battlecruiser 3000AD

Surely one of the most controversial games of all time. Battlecruiser 3000AD is also one of the most complex and involving space sims you'll ever play. For those prepared to invest the time, Battlecruiser will reward you with a gaming experience like no other.

Find out for yourself, Directsoft have provided 5 copies of the game for this comp.

Q. Who is the producer of Battlecruiser 3000AD?

Logitech SurfMan

We told you about this sexy controller in issue 10. It's effectively a cordless trackball, although Logitech prefer to think of it as an Internet controller. Whatever, the Surfman is a very cool thing to call your own. Now you can, because Logitech have made 5 available to us to give to you. Good eh?

Q. What technology does the Surfman use to earn the title "cordless"?

Interstate 76

You must play Interstate 76. Can't put it any simpler than that. You need it. Beg, buy, borrow or steal it - or hey, win one! Yes, Activision's 70s road combat game is up for grabs. 6 of them are ready to be won, so enter and cross your fingers.

Q. What's the name of the Duke's car used in Dukes of Hazzard?

Issue 10 winners:

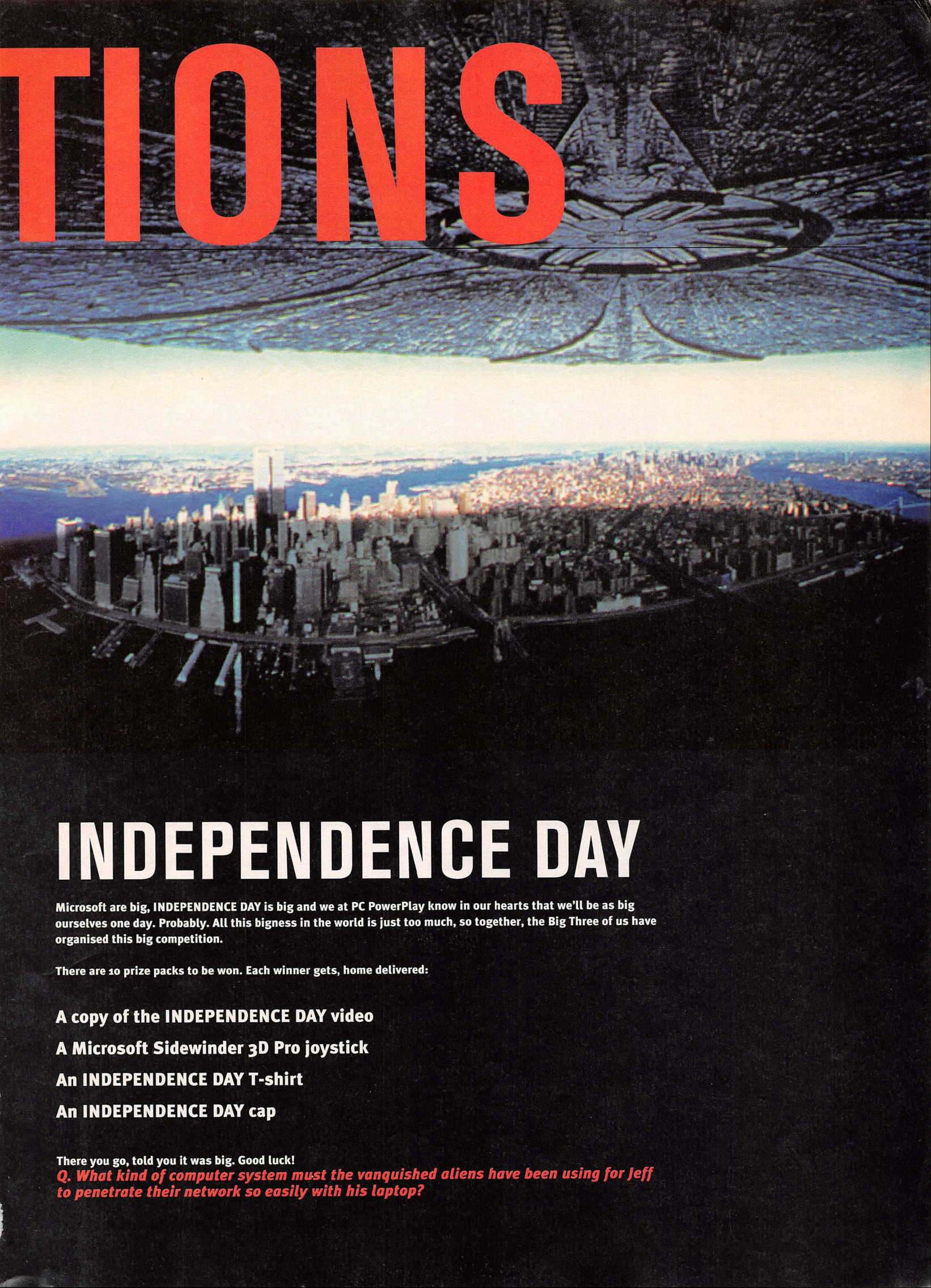
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 M Sharpe, Cambridge Park NSW

STAR WARS COMP
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DISC WORLD 2 COMP
 T Forsyth, Maroochy QLD.
 P Blackmore, Officer VIC.
 D Bray, Cohuna VIC.
 V Jose, Cunderdin WA.
 T O'Brien, Lawton QLD.

HEROES OF MIGHT & MAGIC COMP
 D Petts, Bundaberg QLD.
 J. M Sclater, Carlton TAS.
 A Giamnone, Haberfield NSW.
 J Kautto, Adamstown NSW.
 A Burden, Grange SA.

DIAMOND MONSTER 3D COMP
 J Leong, Balaclava VIC.



TIONS

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Microsoft are big, INDEPENDENCE DAY is big and we at PC PowerPlay know in our hearts that we'll be as big ourselves one day. Probably. All this bigness in the world is just too much, so together, the Big Three of us have organised this big competition.

There are 10 prize packs to be won. Each winner gets, home delivered:

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A Microsoft Sidewinder 3D Pro joystick

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An INDEPENDENCE DAY cap

There you go, told you it was big. Good luck!

Q. What kind of computer system must the vanquished aliens have been using for Jeff to penetrate their network so easily with his laptop?

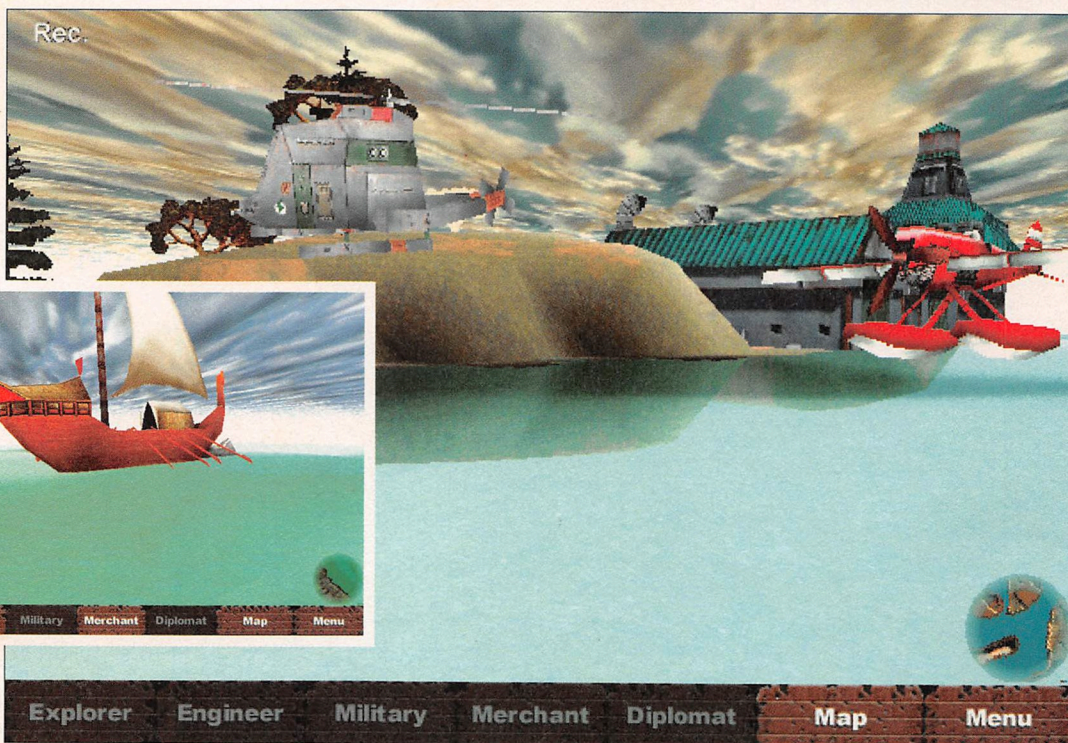
Riverworld

Category	Strategy
Players	1-network
Publisher	Cryo
Available	June

Many game designers, motivated by commercial realities, are faced with developing a new game within only the most popular genres. These are currently real-time strategy and 1st person action. Boring snoring, we say. Originality is being flushed down the toilet in favour of certain-sellers. Hooray for Cryo then, a French developer who have forged what is possible a new genre by creating a game that actually combines the current hot genres.

Riverworld is your traditional C&C clone - build bases, produce units, research better gear etc, but you're there, running around between buildings, dodging tanks and taking cover during air strikes. Sounds just a bit supremely cool, doesn't it! At any time you can tap the space bar for an instant overhead big picture, just in case your brain has trouble coping with this New Way.

We've been playing with a beta and things are looking very promising. The 3D world looks absolutely beautiful - the advanced lighting effects alter during the course of the day, clouds roll constantly overhead and the shimmering, reflective water



completes a scene that looks as good as anything a 3D card could do - but Cryo have achieved their 3D wonder on a regulation Pentium. Several resolution modes are there and even

the lowest 320 x 200 looked far better than it had any right to.

Within the 3D world are villagers who wander around, take a nap under a tree and just chat. The effect is believable and very impressive. One of your main initial roles is to gain the support of key characters to aid your conquest. Initially these are woodcutters and the like, but as time progresses you'll need scientists on side. Several eras are seen through the course of a full game, with the player able to progressively move through advancing technology and associated weaponry.

Riverworld looks huge. If it delivers all that's promised we'll have ourselves one classic game. The style is looking good, let's hope Cryo get the substance right.

As your technology evolves, your military hardware advances in power and sophistication. You can instruct these war machines to carry out a mission either in this 1st-person mode, or from above in the traditional strategy way. Alternatively, you can enter the cockpit and do it yourself! Cool or what...



Blood

Category	Action
Players	1-8
Publisher	GT/Roadshow
Available	June

Novel weaponry is the Blood thing. Absolute 3D realism isn't as important here as simple, meaty fun is.

Games built with the Duke Nukem 3D "Build" engine have always had a comical twist. Even those that are supposed to be serious, like Blood, which is on the way fast.

Despite Blood's gothic horror setting and overtly graphic depiction of

messy death, it is still a hoot. Take the weapons, you've got the usual arsenal of shot and machine guns, but also there to play with are fun toys like the voodoo doll (stab it and the in-range enemy writhes in horrible pain) or the aerosol can/cigarette lighter combo (a happy little home-made flame thrower). Hell, even the flare gun is a great laugh - it smoulders in their chest for a few seconds after a hit, then your doomed foe bursts into flames and staggers around a for a bit before dropping to the ground a disappearing in a great poof. It should be scary but these developers



clearly had fun making the game and it comes through beautifully.

Being based on the aging Build engine has handicapped the game slightly. Inhabitants and objects aren't true 3D and it's painfully obvious at times. Nor does the engine like being driven by a mouse

in full mouse-look mode - it slows down, is unwieldy and is a generation behind the Quake engine.

Still, the level design is highly imaginative, as are the beasties and weapons. It's colourful gothic fun and we'll have a full review for you soon.



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Dragon Dice

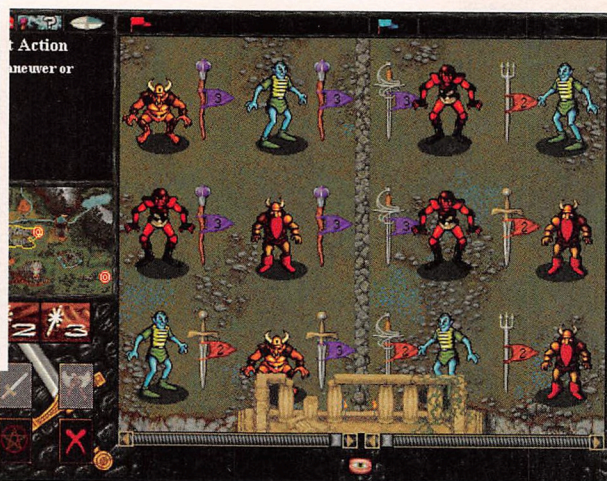
Category	Strategy
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	Interplay
Available	June

Looking joyously like a Heroes of Might and Magic clone, this new Interplay title blends turn-based big picture strategy with micro miniatures tactical combat.

Unlike the massively popular Heroes though, this game offers the complete range of multiplayer options. Naturally a stand alone component is the core of the game, but also catered for are all the usual range of multideath facilities. Most appealing is internet play. While the final number of supported players wasn't available at the time of writing, expect at least 8-player support over a network with

at least 4 players over the web.

Dragon Dice is a licensed AD&D property, which is where the game's name originated. All these games use randomisers to calculate a battle's outcome - being so upfront about it is a fresh twist. A series of campaigns hold the stand alone game together. It's all got something to do with an epic battle between the forces of Nature in a quest

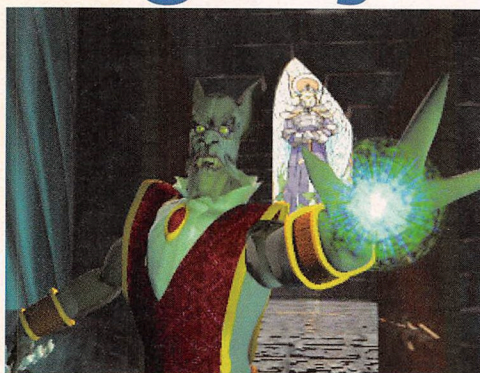


for world domination. Whatever. Gameplay involves a series of battles between your Dice Armies in the big push for complete map ownership. Summoning creatures during battle and actively employing magic spells to ward off aggressors are a couple of the

(above) The micro-miniatures battles resemble Heroes of Might and Magic - as does the rest of the game, which can only be a good thing.

combat treats in store, but expect a whole lot more from the traditionally complex AD&D universe.

Legacy of Kain



Category	Action/RPG
Players	1
Publisher	Activision/Crystal Dynamics
Available	June



This game absolutely reeks of die-hard RPG PC gamer freak, but Legacy of Kain comes to us from the Playstation and was hatched in the house of Crystal Dynamics - better known for cutsey platform games like Gex and Pandemonium. Just don't tell people who see you playing and try not to think about it yourself and you'll be right. Legacy of Kain is, you see, a thoroughly excellent and very hard-core RPG game.

Taking the overhead/isometric view which, thanks to the likes of Diablo and Ultima, has become the traditional RPG mode. Easing the logistical problem of having to get around the huge game world that is Kain (your character) has the ability to morph into more convenient creatures. Much backtracking is needed and switching to bat-mode sure eases the burden.

The point of the game is a little gruesome, but disturbingly compelling. The intro kicks in with your

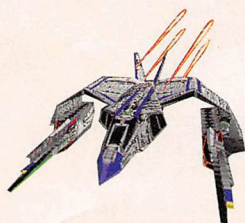
(left) The idea is simply to hunt and drink blood. Here multiple victims make a donation to Kain's blood bank.

character dying a horrid and bloody death. Now in spirit form, your happy quest is to seek out your killer and exact revenge. Along the way you gain sustenance by drinking the blood of your fallen foes - which is depicted very graphically. Marvellous family entertainment!

We've played the Playstation version and enjoyed it immensely. A few changes will be implemented for the game's transition to its rightful home, the PC. Most obviously will be high resolution graphics. 640 x 480 in 16bit colour is expected.



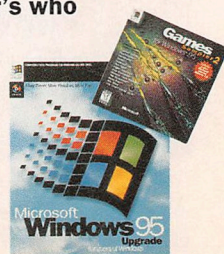
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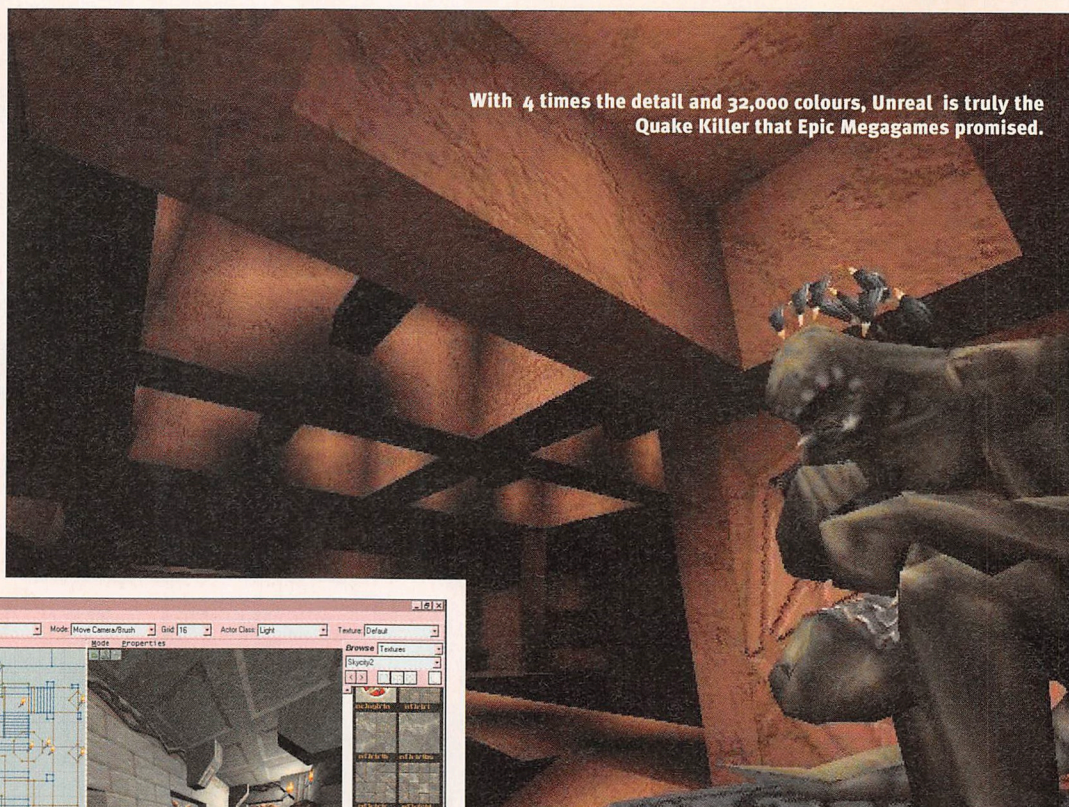
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FRONTLINE WGPCP

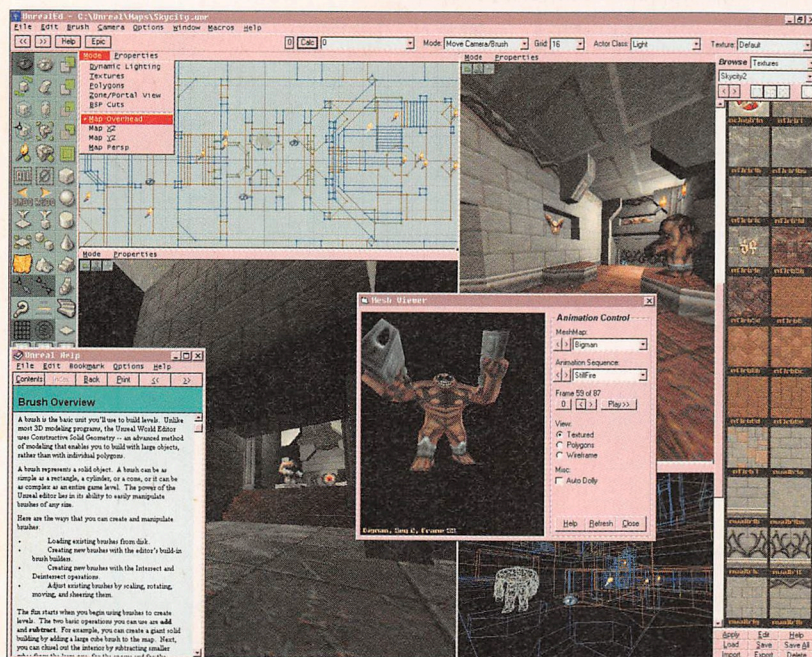
Unreal

Category	Action
Players	1-Internet multi
Publisher	Epic Megagames
Available	Sometime soon

Two years ago Mark Rein dropped into our offices for a visit. Mark is the head of Epic Megagames and was in Sydney to promote their upcoming products. Over lunch (Thai, he paid) Mark whipped



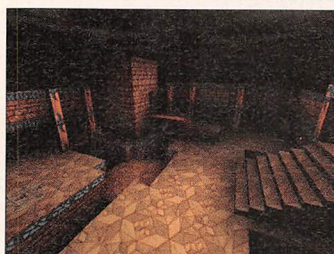
With 4 times the detail and 32,000 colours, Unreal is truly the Quake Killer that Epic Megagames promised.



(left) A simplified version of the level editor will be included with the commercial release.



(above) The architecture is simply beautiful. Epic took 3 years to perfect their level design.



out his laptop and fired up a 3D action game unlike any we'd ever seen. It was true 3D, had texture maps that were too detailed to be true and moved smoothly on his 486DX4 laptop. The dark, gothic environment was unpopulated, but it was still mind blowing. Then Mark ran the level editor and whipped up a duplicate of the PowerPlay main office area while we

finished our prawns. It was one of those special moments. Nothing could compare to what we'd seen. Many months later, while still in development, the game came to be known as just another Quake Killer - as every 3D action game was being promoted as, at the time. But we'd seen this before Quake - and apart from the lack of monsters, it looked *finished*.

The game was Unreal. Two years down the track it's almost finished. How tempting it must have been to rush it through and have it out there, taking all the thunder away from Duke Nukem 3D as Quake's only legitimate competition. To Epic's credit they continued on as if the outside world didn't exist, getting their game *right*.

accelerator support in the form of Win 95 Direct 3D - hopefully with the initial release. What's more, Unreal runs in 16 bit colour mode - a major improvement over Quake's 256 colours.

So Unreal looks the part, but pretty graphics don't make a game great, gameplay does and that's where most of Epic's efforts have gone. Simply packing in a ridiculous number of over the top beasties is too easy and a little dull, so Epic have deliberately tried to duplicate the brilliant terror Doom invoked, with clever positioning of the right kind of beasts. Plausibility - as unlikely as it is, in this sort of game, was their motivation.

There's no definite release date set

for Unreal. It's almost done though, they say, and should be out "soon". Finally, a decent alternative to Quake looks like being just around the corner.

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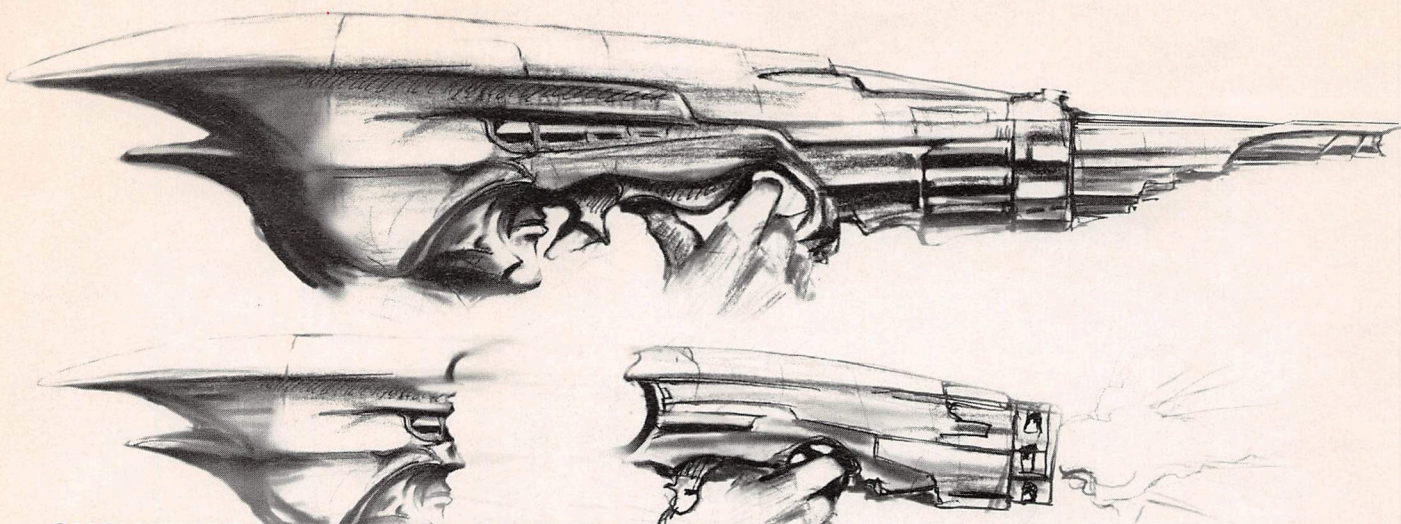
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SHOWTIME WITH SHINY ENTERTAINMENT

DAVE PERRY



LET'S THE GOOD TIMES ROLL IN THE U.S.

It was a cool mid-afternoon in London - but even cooler was Dave Perry, former Brit and Probe person, who with a colleague has set up Shiny Software and gone on to massive success. Our European correspondent Derek dela Fuente brings us the interview with the man responsible for, among others, EarthWorm Jim and Aladdin and is now behind the game that's blowing everyone away - MDK.

Shiny has been building up big reputation lately, and now has an agreement with Interplay for their next series of games. From the early screens shots it looks like more adulation will be coming their way. For anyone who has not met Dave Perry, he is an imposing 6' 8 inches tall and every bit the American dude, having lost all his British mannerisms along the way.

Q. To begin with, what was your reason for leaving the UK and setting up in the U.S.?

There's a bit of a misconception about me leaving the UK. I didn't sit down and say, "hey, let's go to the U.S." I was offered a job at Virgin Games in the U.S. They made an offer which I believe nobody could refuse - an apartment in California right next to the beach and a company car. Their request was to simply write one game and then I could then return to the UK and all expenses would be paid. My reaction was to fly over to the States and have a look around and get a feel for the area - the rest is history. The location was beautiful and I went straight away. One of the strangest facets was that at no time did I feel homesick, and after the 6 months it took to write the game they asked me if I wanted to stay and write another, and so it went on. I really love living in the USA. To answer the question; I never intended to leave the UK, and possibly will not come back!

Are there any fundamental differences in the way companies are run in the States and the way programmers are treated?

Yes. In America, and it is a horrible generalisation, but I will say it because it's true, it's that in England people started programming earlier than in the U.S. because of the likes of Mr Sinclair and Mr Sugar. Effectively they were programming earlier because of the new machines being developed. All the U.S. guys had were machines with joypads whereas in the U.K. We had machines like the Spectrum and C64 with keyboards - and we were able to programme. Also at the start there were no multi-million pound contracts to be had, you were paid just enough to live... and if you lived you were paid less. Very quickly you would run out of money and not be able to complete a game. It was the English method that taught the Americans how to get things done. In the U.S. the industry is very much one where you are employed as an employee and so there are many 9 to 5 programmers, and this is OK for them. This has drawbacks though - you will see many programmers sit playing Doom, not working and so games take a long time to develop, which very much is a culture difference that England has never had. Effectively what I am saying is that in the U.S. as a relatively small guy working hard you can make a fortune. All you have to do is to write something really impressive, and quickly. There's no

point writing a game over a long period. I guess it was the British mentality that I took to the U.S. which has helped to achieve success.

Recently you caused a stir with a proposed speech about the merits of working in the U.S. and you were even asked to cut this bit from your speech. What were your thoughts on that?

I have an opinion and I will stand by it and I really piss people off by saying it. I'm a developer and I fully stand by my colleagues. Developers can have a much better life in America and they can earn much more money and generally have a higher standard of living than in Europe - but tell that to the developers in the U.K. and they will want to leave, and that's going to annoy publishers but I don't care, for I'm a developer and I look after my own. I can help fellow programmers obtain a green card for the U.S., set up an attorney and ensure they can get to the U.S. without too much of a problem. All I am doing is making their life better! I have to tread carefully for publishers are getting really annoyed at me and that isn't a good thing. The reality is that I would rather be good friends with developers than publishers. The only real advice I was going to give was take care, for some publisher's will say, "If you screw up, we'll send you back". I was going to explain how to set yourself up without too many hassles and with a nice time to look forward to. I tell it as it is and don't care what the publishers think!

How many people now work at Shiny, and what is your role?

My job is to try to keep the team small and tight. We have an office near the beach in California just like in Bay Watch - and I'm not joking. I don't want to turn Shiny into a big corporation though, our limit is 30 people and it will never get bigger than that. We try to write two games at a time which don't compete with each other. This ensures people won't feel that within the teams they're competing, and everyone has a say. We normally have one game for PC and one for console at a time. When MDK finishes everyone will move on to Wild 9.

So now you're President of Shiny - but you started as a programmer. Do you still program?

I don't anymore. After doing EarthWorm Jim and all that was associated with the game, like the TV show, I started to get interested in the broader aspects of the day to day running of the company like the licensing and so on. It's strange that you can write a game like EarthWorm and then when it becomes popular on TV a lot of people

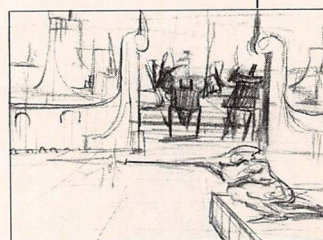
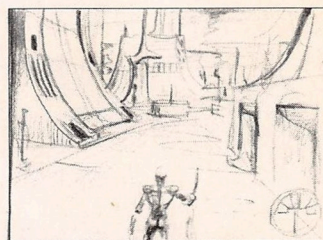
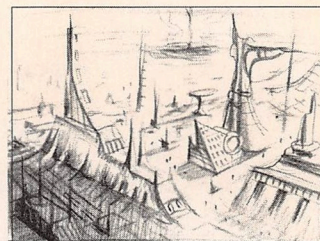
don't realise it originated as a game. When the movie people came to us about turning EarthWorm into a TV series it was funny because, OK, we had a game character and a space craft but not a full script for them to work on. Now when I think about a game I worry about it having a good enough script and storyboard that it will make an easy transition from video to TV format.

How about a quick overview of 'MDK', your next title?

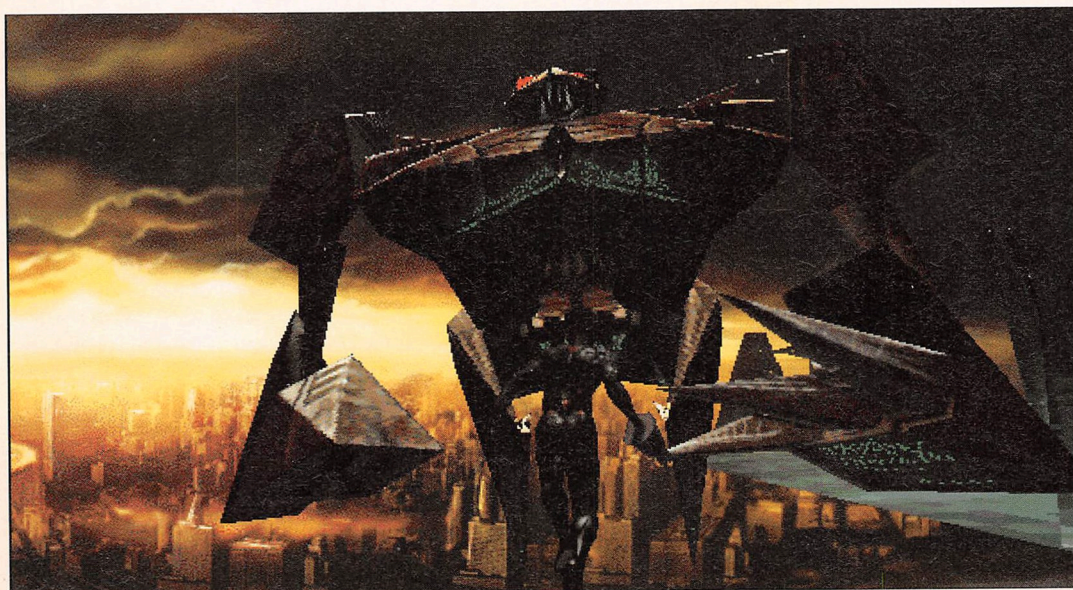
MDK is a game made by a bunch of console guys working on their first PC game. On the PC we're surprised that the people writing PC games haven't tried to take more advantage of what they have. The reason is that they tend to work on the PC all the time and become a bit blasé in what they are doing and don't really focus on the strengths of the machine. It's only when you work on console that you realise how limited you are - the consoles are so restrictive, you can only get so much 'stuff' on a cartridge, and every bit has to be used. One of the main problems is that teams will say on the PC, 'well our game works fine but you need a faster PC'. Shiny can't say that on a console you have to work within a structured framework. I think it's ridiculous some of the things the PC developers are saying when it comes to the specs their games are working within. Effectively we have come onto the PC and said 'Hey, we have high resolution colour, lots of memory, CD Rom drive, sound cards, harddrive and so on! Great!'

MDK will run in High Res, we have some amazing blast effects, and no clipping. We have the most accurate collision detection you will have ever seen in a game. We have gone absolutely crazy. Every single field where other developers are competing against us we have gone to where we believe they will be next year or the year after, so you could well see tons of people copying MDK.

MDK is all set in the future, and the scenario is that you have streams of energy in space that no one has ever known about. They are thin bands of energy, invisible, just there. To cut a long story short, Earth finds these energy sources and it's the answer to the problems of energy resources and they're free. The downside to these streams is that they are like mini motorways for alien lifeforms to travel through space, because moving along these they can move faster than the speed of light. Once Earth starts to tap into these energy streams it redirects these paths straight to Earth. Once they are there they start to build 'cities on wheels' the size of huge towns. Moving these massive cities, which are driven by some crazy aliens, across the land destroys everything in their path. Another point to take into account is



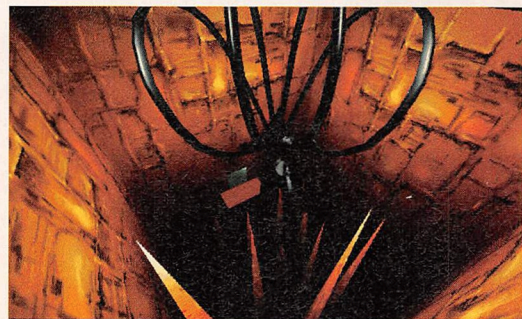
4 of the original storyboard design sketches



"We have wanted to make MDK for years but haven't because the console couldn't cope with the demands of the game. It is only this year that we believe that the PC is ready for MDK."

that each city has a totally different feel. One could be like a giant asylum, another military, one prison, etc.

Your job is to spot one of these cities and land on it, travel across the location avoiding all the guards trying not just to blast people (the more noise you make the more aliens will hear you and get together and attack) but to subtly take guards out, whilst finding the best routes and generally be clever in moving, hiding and killing a few aliens and strategically working towards finding the main bad guy who is running the whole city. Once you find him, you destroy him and then move on to another city. warned though, the alien cities are all large and will present some very unusual problems. The fact that the PC loads whilst you are playing means you are constantly seeing new graphics, giving the game a visual edge not seen before.



Once again we hear a development team talk about their revolutionary 3D games technology. Could you expand on what you are innovating?

We are focusing in on what people like to play on the PC, although that might sound condescending. There are lots of tricks in a game like Mario, like being able to explore, go places where you do not need to go. Specs like that we have in MDK. We aren't revolutionary but we

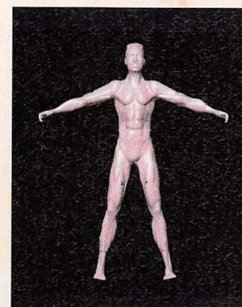
believe there are many ways to achieve things and we focus on building as many ideas into a game as possible. There are numerous ways to get from A to B, but too many people go for the easy option.

You have had major success on console formats with your games, do you now believe that the PC architecture is geared right for arcade games and do you feel it has the right user base?

It's kind of funny. We have wanted to make MDK for years but haven't because the console couldn't cope with the demands of the game. It is only this year that we believe that the PC is ready for MDK. In the future Shiny shall probably make all their games for the PC - and that's a scary sign for the console guys. The only problem the PC has is that it is disgusting in plugging in so many cards and the IRQ problems it throws up. Hopefully once Plug and Play works that could end a few nightmares. Once the hardware issue goes away, when the user can just buy a PC and it has built in 3D support, etc. it's going to be awesome. Price is also a major restriction.

You suggest that a Pentium machine is ideal for MDK, firstly how restricted are you at present with the process speed, secondly, when do you feel the speed of machines will eventually level off and finally, on the same point do you believe the standardising and the use of 3d accelerator cards in the PC will be the next quantum leap?

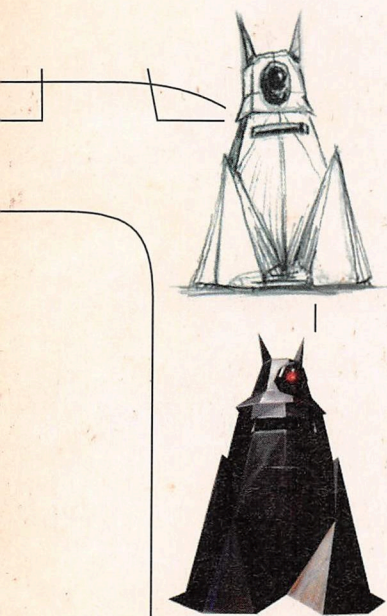
I cannot see any restrictions on the PC. I cannot see a limit to what the PC can do and there will never come a time when you will say, 'no more, that's the limit'. Looking at certain features and improving on them opens up new areas, so the progression of the



Rotoscoping and rendering our hero, Kurt, for realistic movement.

machine will always continue. If the PC cannot do a certain task, they will look at it and ask themselves what they can do that could solve the problem. They would redesign the way they would approach things and occasionally this would result in them achieving something but it would take 20 minutes to run - this they would be satisfied with because they have got a result. Shiny on the other hand would say 'No way!' and ensure that we could come up with the perfect way to execute a problem in a time that was perfect for the game. At the end of the day there are so many things to do like shifting memory, moving things off the floor that you can nearly always solve a problem.

Some people might say a lot of people are losing out just writing games for a high end PC but this is the type of thing we have had to face every day on the console in trying to push it to the limit. Effectively there are tricks we have in MDK, on the PC where a lot of people on slower machines will be able to play it. A great example of that is that if you have a large character moving about often the animation slows down and only gets back to normal when the large character has gone. That's an example of what standard PC programmers are satisfied with. What we do is to say, the large character is slowing things down, so let's move the character out of view, focus on the large character, watch it move and then cut back and hey presto you have no reduction in speed. This scenario works for many sequences, it is a matter of cutting frames, and working hard to get things right. One point we always say is, don't mess with the player and ensure controls are always smooth. If it feels good, it looks good. It's a neat trick but I don't see many people doing it.



The original sketch then final render of a simple sentry activation guard.



DAVE PERRY - Quick Questions

What, if anything, do you miss about the UK?

The food. If you asked an American what he thought of English food, they think it is bland crap! I think everything is better here. Tea tastes nicer, butter is nicer, and crisps are tastier. The problem with America is that they are very health conscious especially where I live, California. Nothing unhealthy survives there, so butter is out!

What was the last book you read and last film seen?

I don't read books, I just don't have the time. I try to see movies as often as possible. The last one was Phenomena, a John Travolta film.

Favourite game by another developer?

My all time favourite is Populous. The one I have played the most recently was Command and Conquer.

What car do you own?

Dodge Viper. An obscene car fuelled like a rocket. It does about 180 MPH and I have had it modified to go faster!

Best country visited?

Hmm.. The best two? Egypt for the SCUBA diving, but the nicest place I have been is a town in Ireland.

What are your favourite pastimes?

Flying helicopters, and I am just about to get my pilots licence.

Favourite actor/actress?

No one I can say outright. I'm more into directors like James Cameron.

Who in the game industry do you most respect?

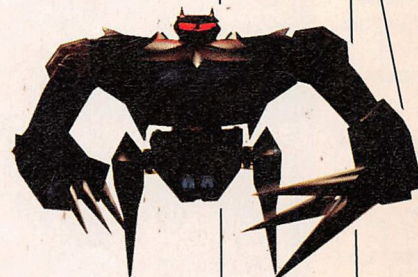
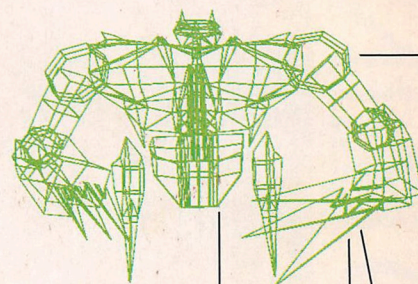
No one.. the people that buy my games.

If you hadn't become involved in the computer industry what do you think you would be doing now?

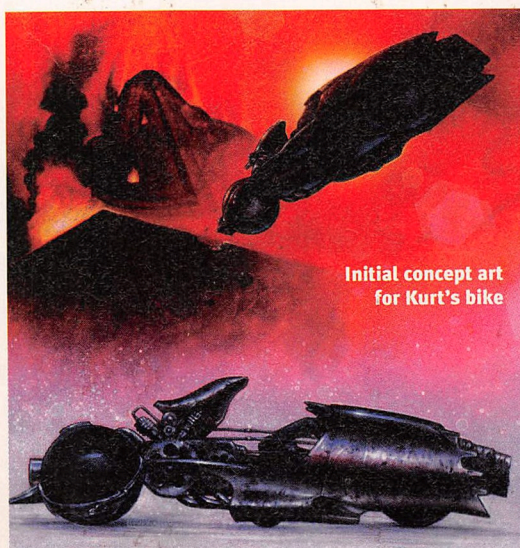
I was training at school to be a dentist but feel I made the right choice.

Finally, do you now regard yourself as American?

I have a green card, so I have a choice. I am definitely British though.



The wire-frame and final render of a sentry boss



Initial concept art for Kurt's bike

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MDK

After dominating the console market with award winning games like Earthworm Jim, Shiny have jumped the fence. MDK is their first PC title and the future looks good...

They used to make console games, and very popular ones too, such as Earthworm Jim. Now Shiny Software, under the leadership of Dave Perry, have seen the light and have realised just how much better the PC is as a gaming platform. You can read what he thinks in our interview with Dave in this issue, and the Shiny website is full of reasons why they think the PC kicks the butt of any console. So, to their first title for the PC. It's called MDK, and as to what that stands for, your guess is as good as mine. It's commonly referred to as Murder Death Kill (a charming and very appropriate title), but the press release would have us believe that it stands for "Max, Dr. Fluke Hawkins & Kurt", after the three good guys in the game, or another press release proclaiming the title to mean Mission: Dispense Kindness. Really, it's not all that important - we'll just call it MDK and leave it at that ok?

The energy superhighway

MDK has a great background story. It smacks of real effort on Shiny's part, and it's easy to tell that the story came first, and then the game was developed from it, rather than the other way around. There's all these streams, you see. Well actually, you don't - that's kind of the point. There's all these invisible streams of... energy discharge stuff that rocket around the galaxy really, really fast. When humans discover the energy discharge paths, they develop the technology to divert some of them to Earth. Bingo! Unlimited free energy - no more mining coal, no more hydro-electric dams. Everyone's happy. Everyone that is, including the stream riders; Alien type nasties that use the energy streams to travel across the galaxy in search of worlds ripe for subjugation and assimilation. One such group of stream riders, led by

Günter Glut, discover Earth and move in for the kill (presumably preceded by murder and death). The way these guys work is by sticking these big huge ugly moving cities down on Earth, and enslaving all the humans to mine for their minerals (uh oh, looks like we might be heading into subtext territory here...) rampaging and ravaging wherever they go. The aliens don't have a great driving license test procedure however, and the alien mobile city drivers tend to roll over lots of Earth cities - completely levelling them. So most of the population have become slaves, and the few that are left cower in the cities praying that they won't get squished by the alien equivalent of a cab driver during rush hour. Not good news for the earth people - but wait, all is not lost!



A few grenades in the ventilation shafts open the way.

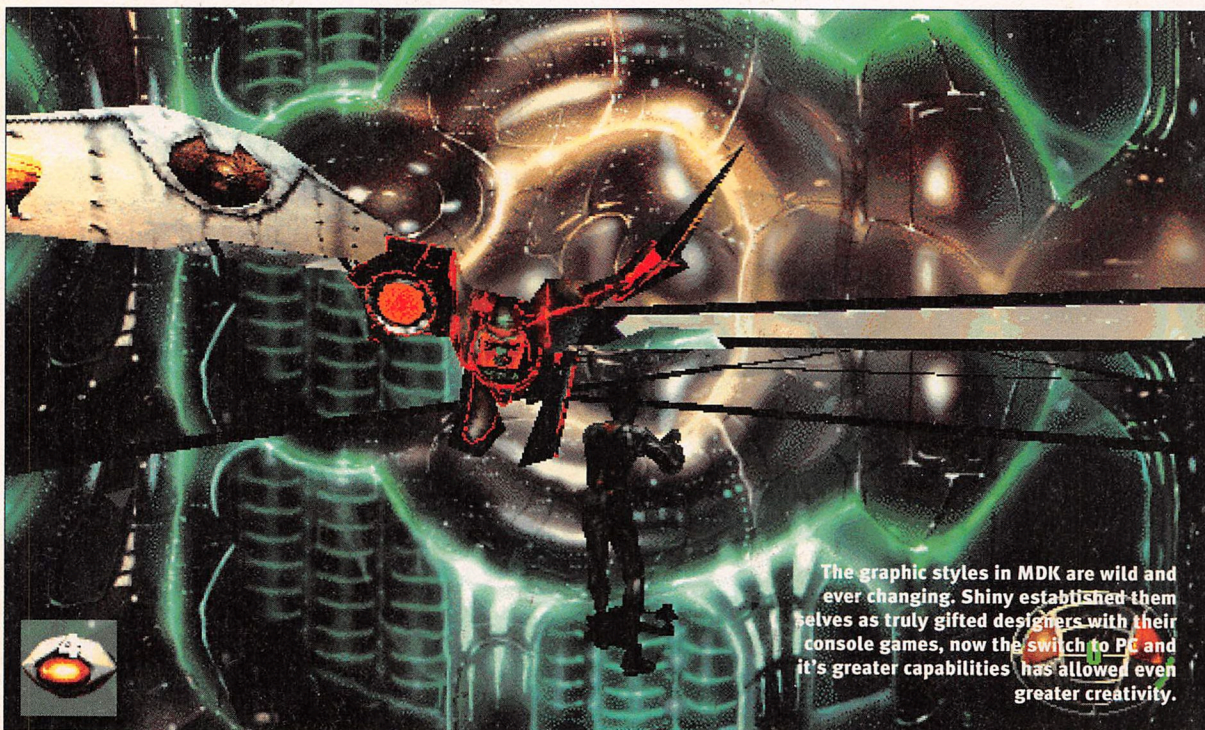
Quick Mr Goldblum, get the laptop ready!

Kurt, the main character, in the fine tradition of heroes with an odd sidekick of some sort is required to come to the rescue of the whole world (not by uploading a Mac virus to the mothership, thankfully). The good doctor Fluke Hawkins, who of course is a scatterbrained genius that no-one quite understands set off into space five years before the aliens came, to research something or other, and took along with him his assistant Kurt and his genetically engineered dog Bones. When they returned, they found the Earth in crisis, and realised that it was up to them to save it. So, with the aid of a

few of the Doc's weird inventions Kurt jumps down into an alien city to try and kill everyone and everything. And so begins MDK.

Big cities, big designs, big fun.

There's 8 cities in all, and they're all pretty bloody large. The level designs are excellent and beautifully laid out. The game follows the usual style; fight your way through various minions to get to the big baddie at the end, and then there's the ultimately big baddie at the end of the last city. Each of the cities has 4 sections, all requiring different



The graphic styles in MDK are wild and ever changing. Shiny established themselves as truly gifted designers with their console games, now the switch to PC and its greater capabilities has allowed even greater creativity.



In glide-mode you gracefully coast past obstacles.



Many devices and traps need figuring out in MDK.



Open combat fields demand agility.

strategies, with different enemies and situations to face. The way the game is played is kind of weird. It's a bit like 'Quake goes to Europe and mates with a platformer' - don't worry, I'll explain. A large part of the gameplay is in the same style as Quake, with a 3d run around and shoot anything that moves style. And in a move that's become synonymous with European (particularly French) games, MDK is shown from the third person 'over the shoulder' perspective. The third part becomes apparent when it's explained that the rampaging kill-fest is interspersed with something of an anomaly for PC gamers lately - platforms! Often, there will be alien nasties and weapons turrets and the like running or hovering around nearby, but a move of some expertise will be required - jump up through a section of platforms to get to the top level and so on. They moves required for the platforming bits aren't all that exacting and do really work well, adding another cool element to the gameplay.

Baddies with bums

So, the level designs are nicely varied, but what about the alien baddies? Well, there's plenty of them, and they're wonderfully done. All of them are beautifully styled polygon type figures, and have randomly generated attitudes. Some will be aggressive, toe to toe fighters, whereas others of the same type will



run away when shot, and others still will just cower on the floor whimpering until you blow them away. Then, if they're hiding behind one of the many impenetrable opaque walls they'll taunt and mock you, and proudly display their rather rotund nether regions (Ok, ok, they chuck brownies at you).

The impenetrable opaque walls are plentiful, and being impenetrable won't blow up no matter how many times you shoot them. The only way to get around them is to go into sniper mode. One of Doctor Hawkings weapon designs is a gun that's strapped onto Kurt's head, allowing for him to zoom in on his target in stunning



Yes, you CAN shoot while gliding!

detail. It doesn't work like 'wait for a blobby sprite to appear in fits and starts as you zoom in', but right from the start where the baddie is no bigger than a pixel it will grow smoothly to fill the screen right up detail so high that you can see the whites of their eyes. Incredible! Anyway, with the aforementioned impenetrable walls there's always a hole of some sort that you can lob your weapon of choice through one you're in sniper mode, giving the brownie-ing baddies the shock of their life. Big fun. And there's also usually an explosive crate conveniently placed so that it will destroy the previously impenetrable wall, allowing you to continue along your merry way.

Cool ways to blow stuff up

There's also plenty of variety in the weapons available too. The story goes that Doc Hawkins, being a bit of an absent minded kind of doctor, forgot to give you all your weapons before he chucked you out of his spaceship to land on the moving alien city. So, he follows you around in the ship and throws the weapons out from time to time in areas near you, and though your basic weapon has unlimited ammo, all the others will run out fairly quickly. Some of the things you can pick up include mortar shells, sniper rockets, grenades, super chain guns, the World's Smallest Nuclear Weapon, the World's Most Interesting Bomb, as well as legs of lamb, apples and bon-bons for those much needed health boosts. The World's Most Interesting Bomb, I just have to explain here. What it does is attract all the monsters in the area to it, who stand motionlessly around it in awe until it blows up in their faces... so if you throw the bomb off the edge of a cliff the aliens will do their lemming impression, falling to their doom while you stand there and giggle a lot. Most cool.

All up, it's a hell of a game. MDK kind of sits in between a few genres, with platform elements, full on in your face shoot-em-up situations and plenty of humour as well.



Sniper mode is used frequently.



You can zoom-in amazing distances while sniping.

There are definite signs that it comes from a (previously) console oriented development company, but Shiny have produced a game that showcases some of the potentialities of the PC in ways that are sure to make the established PC developers blush.

Gareth Jones

+ Plus

www.shiny.com



83%

Category	Shoot 'em up
Players	1
Publisher	Shiny
Price	\$89.95
Rating	M15
Available	Now

For Large, interesting levels that blend shoot-em-up elements with some platforming. High humour level, and excellent use of PC graphics capabilities.

Against Games can only be saved at the end of each city. Adds to the realism, but dying towards the end can be very frustrating. Music can get annoying after a while.

Need P60, 16MB RAM, 2 x CD

Want P133, 4 x CD

INTERSTATE '76

It's one hell of a Funkin' game man, you dig?

Interstate '76...well what can I say? It's the game that works in tandem with cable TV par excellence - watch an episode or two of the Rockford Files, the Dukes of Hazzard, Starsky and Hutch, C.H.i.P.s, or Charlie's Angels and you'll be primed for Interstate '76 (or the other way around works equally well too). Flares, every cliché imaginable, afros that just about eclipse the sun, big fat 70s muscle cars, mirror sunnies, long long sideburns, body shirts, a fat Italian gangster type in a flared and pin-striped suit, an inbred mechanic with a silly name, dry dusty desert roads where the law doesn't even think about going... but you get the idea. Every cliché of schlock 70s TV is revisited and re-celebrated in this big bold and beautiful game. Essentially it's a driving shoot 'em up, and bears more than a passing resemblance to the MechWarrior 2 style engine, but it's also so much more. Interstate '76 is

the funkier title ever for the PC, bar none. It looks absolutely fantastic, and is bloody addictive as well.



These cars roll just like a true 70s car.

It's just you holding back a world o' hurt

So you wanna know what's goin' on huh? Well, listen up man, and listen good, 'cos if you don't then you gonna be dead, you dig? It's 1976, only a slightly different 1976. Crime is rampant, gas is scarce, and no-one, especially the police, cares. It's a time



The cockpit is a true 3D environment.

for vigilantes... auto vigilantes. You are Groove Champion, son of Nick Champion, a four time winner at Daytona and Tammy, a former Miss America. You race cars, but high profile victories have thus far eluded you. Your sister Jade, however, is the best in the business. Or she was, until she was brutally murdered by



You pack some serious weaponry!

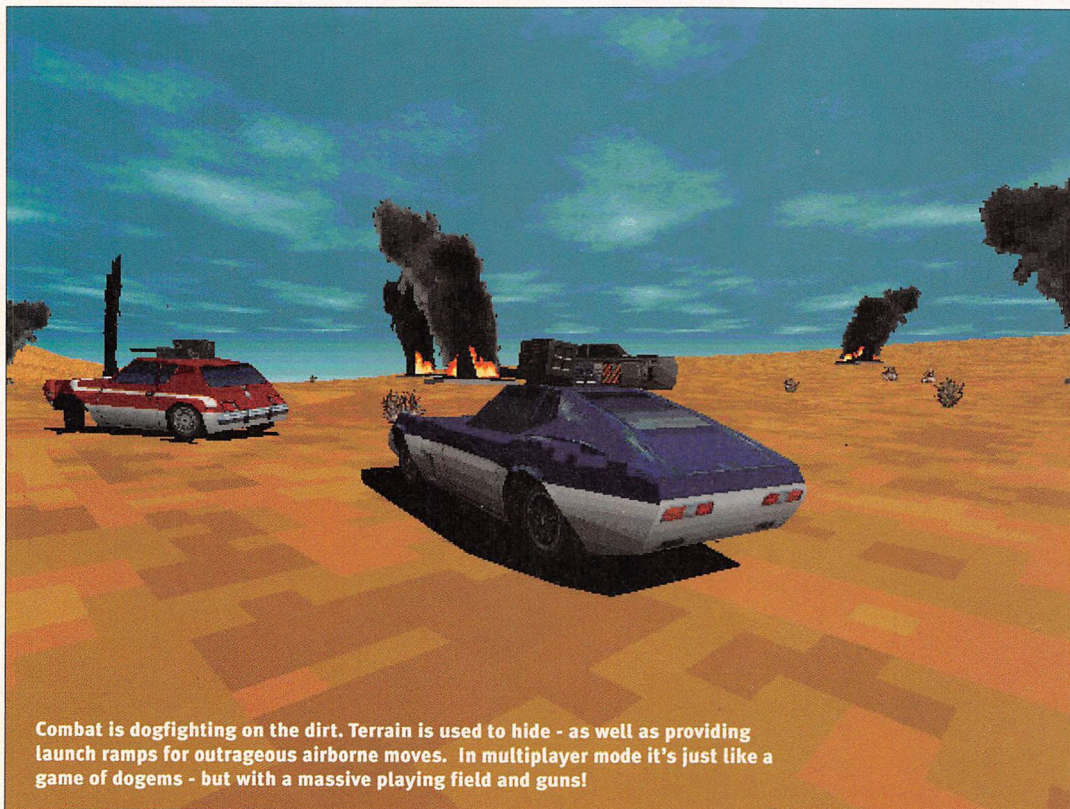
beige safari suit and has a crotch bulge that John Holmes would be proud of, is originally from New England (where he was a poet). He came to the desert to clear his head when his wife and daughter were killed by criminals, and never left. He's now Groove's partner, and fills him in on Jade's secret life, dispens-

"The plot involves a nuclear strike on US oil reserves and UFOs at Roswell"

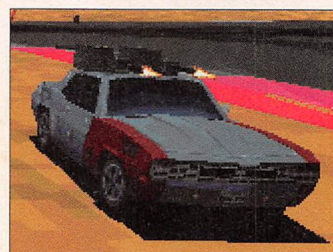
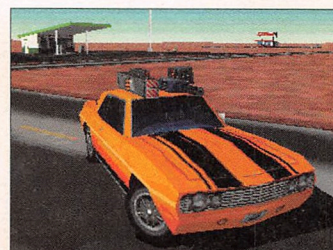
person or persons unknown. After her murder Groove discovers that Jade was involved with a group of auto-vigilantes, cruising around the badlands outside Texas in customised cars replete with machine guns, rocket launchers, flamethrowers and a host of other essential auto vigilante equipment.

Jade's former partner Taurus, a seasoned auto vigilante who wears a

ing information such as "The pigs don't do shit. We're the only ones left to hold back a world o' hurt. If you don't like it you can walk back to whatever the hell it is you call a life". Groove, of course, being a rather cool and groovy guy replies "I think better on the highway"...and so begins the search for Jade's killer. As the scenario develops it becomes clear that there is a criminal mastermind



Combat is dogfighting on the dirt. Terrain is used to hide - as well as providing launch ramps for outrageous airborne moves. In multiplayer mode it's just like a game of dogems - but with a massive playing field and guns!



The 70s - era of the muscle car.

behind all the shit that's been goin' down lately. Jade's killer, and the mastermind behind all the aforementioned shit is Antonio Malochio.

I won't give too much about the plot away here, but it involves a nuclear strike on US oil reserves and UFOs at Roswell.

Altogether Malochio is one very bad dude, and it's up to Groove and Taurus to extract revenge for Jades' death, save the US oil supply, and ensure that there's enough gas for all the Made In The USA 70's muscle cars.

Funky fun to play

The plot is revealed to you through the cut scene sequences at the beginning end of every scenario, of which there are 17 in total. They're all visually stunning (and often rolling-around-the-floor funny), with requisite crap 70s TV camera angles, and the strutting polygon figures (no-one walked in the 70's, everyone strutted, apparently) who epitomise every aspect of 70's cops-and-robbers TV characters.

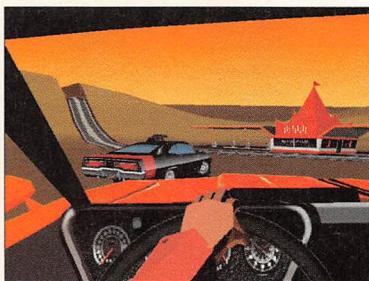
So the atmosphere, both in-game and rendered visuals, and the plot are all fantastic, but what about the game itself - is it any good? Shit yeah! Essentially, it's a very simple game. Cruise around in your Pirhana, target the opposition and blow 'em away. The missions are well varied though, with a good variety of tasks and challenges. Nearly

all of them involve car to car combat of some sort, but the opposition drive a diverse range of vehicles (including a school bus!) and the

missions are often split into two parts with a driving sequence followed by combat. As you progress there's also the opportunity to add to the basic weapons you start with.

Skeeter, your inbred mechanic friend, follows you around in a van and cannibalises the debris from the wrecks of the cars you destroy along the way. Among the items he picks up for you are V-10 595 cl engines, improved suspension, Nitrous Oxide, cup holders (gotta

put that Big Gulp somewhere!), heated seats (comfort is important), cluster bomb launchers, mortars, flamethrowers, napalm, radar guided missiles, 7.62 milimetre NATO mini-guns, molotov slingshots, landmines, bigger and stronger tires, and better brakes. Way cool!



Stop at a diner for a burger and coke...



Let there be no mistake - BAD GUY.



The intro is true 70s style.

the music is going to make you want to break the flares out of the closet and get down. But wait, there's more! All this and multiplayer too! The melee section sets you in a scenario against a host of computer players, or a group of human players either through the Internet or modem or a network. In melee mode there's 24 types of cars to choose from, all with fully customisable layouts, and your choice of weapons.

Realistic 70s handling

The control method during these acts of extreme destruction and wanton rampaging is excellent also. There are two driving modes, arcade and... not arcade. Arcade mode has fairly unrealistic responses, and is only really for woosie types. The 'proper' driving mode is great however. You really get the feeling that you're driving a car (and a one mean mother of a car at that) - the turning circle is fairly realistic, as is the braking distance and car dynamics.

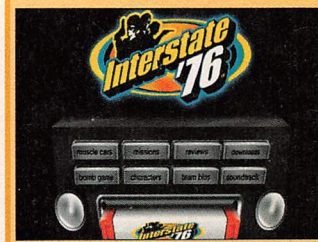
There's a number of driving aids as well. A radar to tell you where the enemies are, a map, a notepad, a damage display, a targeting device which highlights the targeted car and many, many more. Another area that requires praise is that of damage. In both the picture of the car and the performance, the damage is accurately represented - damage the right hand tire and the car will lilt to that side and pull to the right for the rest

of the mission.

All up it's a fantastic game. The missions are plentiful and varied, the cinematics are absolutely great, the gameplay is simple yet engaging, and

+ Plus

www.activision.com/interstate/index.html



Interstate '76 is definitely going to be a biggie, and deservedly so. The single player missions are great fun, and with multiplayer mayhem on offer the lastability of the game is significantly extended and enhanced. It gets my 'I couldn't stop playing it long enough to write the review properly' award (that's my excuse anyway), and as soon as I finish this I'm going back for some more too.

Gareth Jones

93%

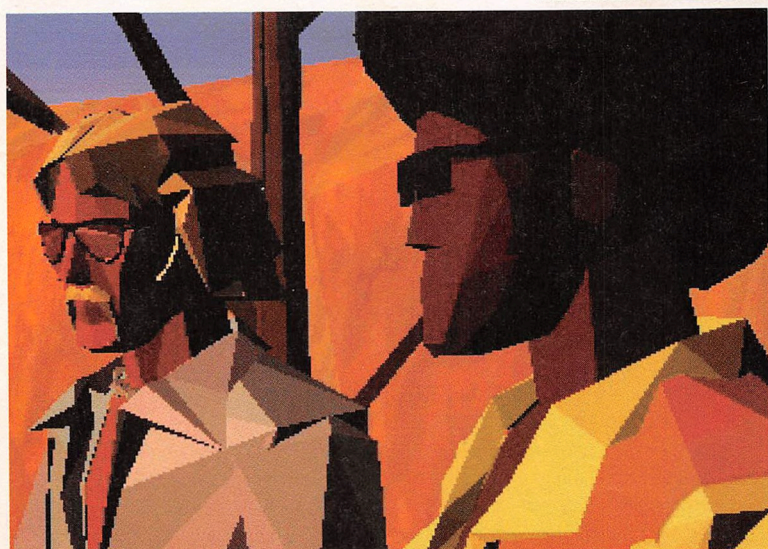
Category	Driving Killing Seventies Sim
Players	1-4
Publisher	Activision
Price	\$TBA
Rating	M15+
Available	Now

For As funky as it gets. The funniest, coolest, funkiest game ever for the PC. Great fun to play, and only gets better with multiplayer.

Against Games can only be saved at the end of missions, so dying towards the end of a mission (often the hardest part) can become a little frustrating.

Need P90, 16MB RAM, 4x Cd-Rom, Win '95.

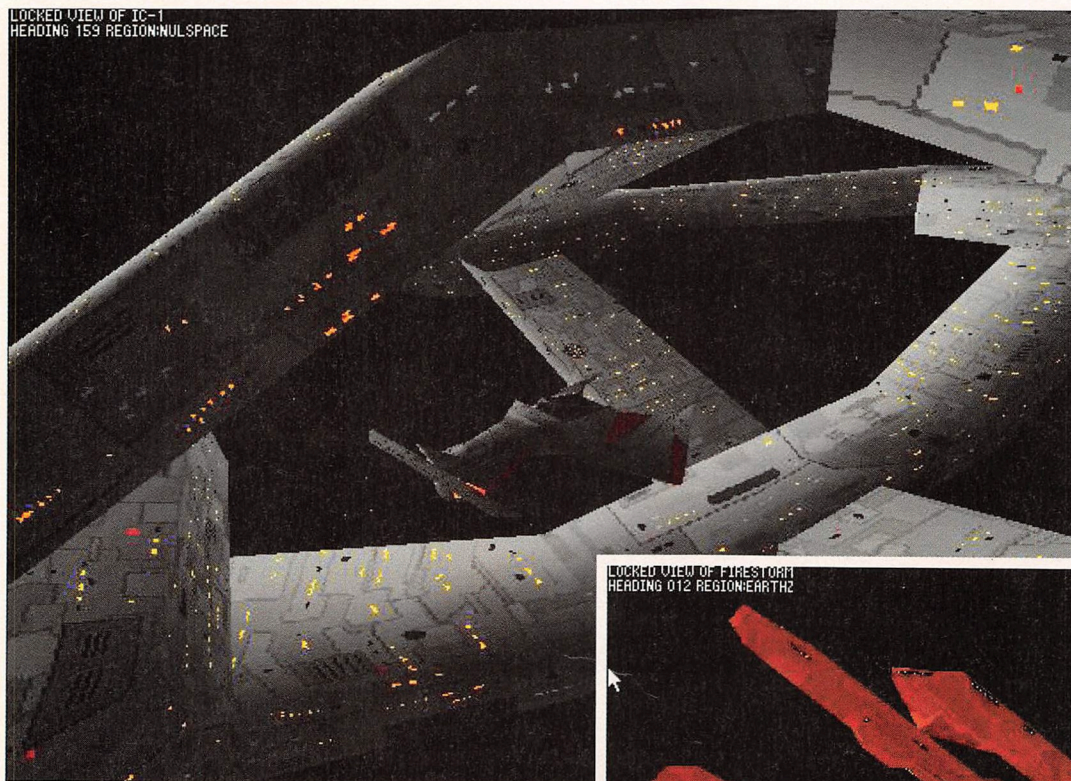
Want P133, 32MB RAM, 3D accelerator card, lots of spare time.



The intro and cut scenes are among the most impressive we've ever seen.

BATTLE CRUISER 3000AD

Controversy surrounds this game. It is without doubt the buggiest game ever released - it's also got the potential to be one of the all-time greats.



Re-entry is seamless and convincing.



(top left) Passing through a massive space station. (above) Beautiful design marks the game.

Battle Cruiser 3000AD (affectionately called BC3K from here on) has a history that no other game could ever match. Programmed by Derek Smart, a rather enigmatic man who has way to much public exposure it has been in development for over 7 years now. Released in the US on October 1996, it was totally buggy, unplayable and infuriated the U.S. victims, err consumers. According to Derek Smart, Take 2, the publishers released his Beta without consent. True or not, to Derek's credit he has persisted diligently with the project.

By February 1997, 4 patches later, Derek had turned an unplayable heap into something that started to resemble his "dream". Called the C4 patch, it made the first incarnation of BC3K that could be played for an extended period. Now, March 1997. Gametek have decided that the C4 patch is good enough. They mastered it, made a new 80 page manual and the UK release was born.

To which Derek Smart jumped on Usenet, and stated that Gametek had wrongly released BC3K (being still incomplete) and that he would not support the UK Release. It was

October 96 all over again, except now, instead of the Americans getting shafted, it was the Europeans. A few negotiations later, the UK release will be supported by 3000AD, and new patches made available. Unless you have access to the Internet though, you're going to be hard pressed to get them.

The universe is yours

In BC3K you play the role of a GALCOM Starship commander. GALCOM is as a type of Intergalactic Police force that patrols star systems keeping all in order. Within your role, you'll watch over precarious standoffs between alien nations and escort important diplomats to different star systems, there's also the occasional criminal to capture.

BC3K would have to be one of the hardest games ever to have to explain the gameplay for. It's like asking someone what a strawberry

tastes like! The primary feeling you get when playing BC3K is that of OVERLOAD, the main screen alone consists of futuristic targeters and other information screens that literally bring up a myriad of options. The radar for example can be clicked on, allowing you to select a target from a series of menus. To target a particular enemy, click on the radar, select the enemy menu and then the enemy ship from within the group. Immediately, the target camera to your right will display the target.

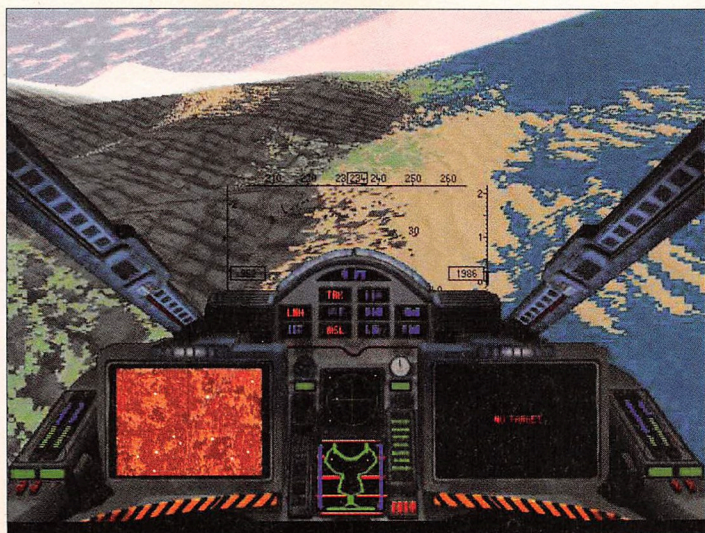
Also to overwhelm you are 94 crew members consisting of marines, offi-

cers, pilots, co-pilots, flight engineers, medics, 4 interceptors, 4 shuttles, 4 All Terrain Vehicles and the massive Battle Cruiser itself. Was it not for the uniquely intelligent AI within the game it might all be too much, but there's more to BC3K then meets the eye.

Supreme gameplay

This gameplay example outlines some of the amazing intricacies that occur in the background:

Your Battle Cruiser is innocently on it's way to a local starbase for some well needed repairs when sud-



Ground combat and exploration is still buggy, but soon this game will have it all.



Coming straight in from space without any cutscene is an amazing thing to experience.

denly it's attacked by 3 enemy cruisers. As the commander, you raise shields and turn on the Passive Weapon System which controls the 3 turret lasers around the cruiser.

The enemy ships start firing on the Battle Cruiser and the shields weaken. Attempting to launch Interceptor 1, you're informed that it is not currently flight ready. The reason, the schmo you left on shift whilst galavanting around the galaxy hasn't had a rest for 40 hours.

Reassigning him with someone else will require the person to walk to the interceptor bay from their quarters, risking injury if the part of the ship they're walking through is damaged. Instead, you attempt to launch Interceptor 2, but you can't because the pilot and co-pilot are currently in the Shuttle bay to pilot Shuttle 1. Interceptors 3 and 4 however are ready for launch so you order them out.

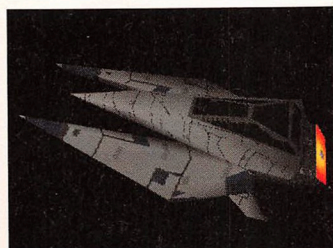
Immediately, 2 green blips appear on your radar and swarm over to the enemy vessel. Although at this point you could take control of one of the interceptors, for the true command experience you can sit back and watch, dynamically changing their orders.

Dynamic and independent AI

This AI and interaction extends throughout the entire game. According to documentation, within the entire galaxy alien nations fight wars and starbases and cities are destroyed and rebuilt, all irrespective of your involvement. It is this realism within the universe that is so intriguing, yet overwhelming almost to the point of total confusion.

Throughout the entire game you constantly have the feeling that there is something immense underneath and you are only ever scratching the surface. Of course, the incredibly poor documentation doesn't help to alleviate this.

Graphically, BC3K is extremely impressive. Without 3D acceleration, the ships and planets are Perspective Correct Textured Gourauded objects. The most amazing implementation of this is within the solar systems, the suns not only follow their own orbits, but light up objects as well. Ships are shaded by the light source and planets and moons have a light



A light fighter in combat. Take control yourself or leave it to the CPU.

and dark side. The effect is fantastically convincing and adds considerable credence to the game.

Needs fumigation

So far, this review hasn't touched on all the possibilities within the game. Some other interesting elements include the non-linearity of the missions. At the completion of a mission you can go planetside, mine some minerals and sell them to the local starbases before requesting another mission.

Sadly, although possible, planetary entry isn't really incorporated very well in the C4 version, it's still "work in progress". It's actually possible to drive through mountains or even under the ground, totally destroying the realism. Other problems occur when flying from the day side of the planet to the night side. In at least 2 separate situations, the main screen went black with the Target camera still seeing the planet correctly. Communications still hasn't been implemented making negotiation impossible. Obviously these problems will be resolved, but that's cold comfort after forking out \$90.

BC3K is one of the most complex future space simulators ever. Quite amazing considering it was essentially programmed by one man. Complexity however means that you have to fully apply yourself to the game which presents one potential little problem - that after becoming one with the Battle Cruiser, to some, such a monumental achievement pales the actual game into insignificance.

Jere Lawrence

Considerable debate took place in the offices of PCPP when it came to awarding a score. We unanimously agreed that BC3000AD was potentially a 90% + game, but in its current state there was simply no way we could call a score that high. Given time (Derek Smart's intention to work at it until it's right is evident and admirable), BC3000AD will reach its potential. The state the game was released in is inexcusable though. Gametek's reputation has taken a dive as a result - and rightly so, the scant respect they showed we, the gamers - their customers, is shabby at best.

78%

Category	Space Sim
Players	1
Publisher	Gametek
Price	\$79.95
Rating	G
Available	Now

For Excellent graphics and vast number of things to do. Interesting missions and totally unique combat from interceptors to marines. Fully immersive environment giving the player total control from planet landing to controlling a fleet of BC's.

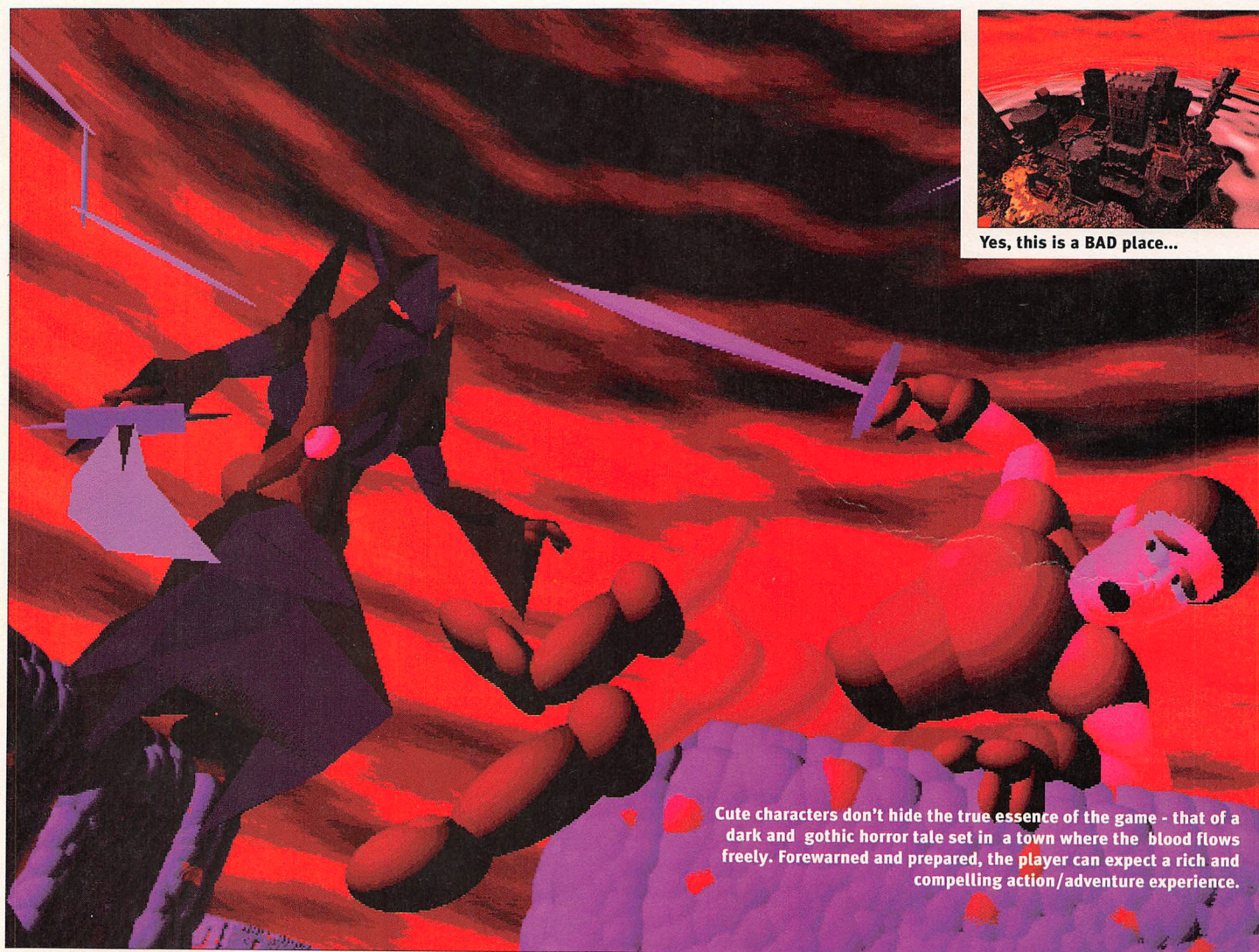
Against Have to pay \$90 to Beta Test - even the developer admits it's not finished. Have to have access to the Internet to download patches. Need a lot of time and patience to learn all the commands.

Need Pentium 133, 8Mb RAM, 2xCD, 80Mb HDD

Want Pentium 166, 32Mb RAM



ECSTATICA 2



Cute characters don't hide the true essence of the game - that of a dark and gothic horror tale set in a town where the blood flows freely. Forewarned and prepared, the player can expect a rich and compelling action/adventure experience.

Extreme medieval blood-letting, super sharp SVGA graphics and those gosh darn lovable ellipsoids. We're ecstatic...

While we wait for his should-be-massive Urban Decay later this year, Andrew Spencer is deliciously whetting our appetite with a sequel to the game that made his name back in 1994, Ecstatica. The plot of Ecstatica 2 continues on from where the first game ended. You have returned home after subduing the evil demons that inhabited the village of Tirich and saving the beautiful Ecstatica herself. Except that all is not well. As you approach the castle gate, a duo of winged beasts swoop from the sky and snatch Ecstatica and yourself from the back of your horse. Later you recover, only to find yourself clamped in the stocks, presumably about to be

tortured. You escape, somehow, and begin your quest to destroy those evil demons all over again.

Numerous mutilated bodies

Two things about E2 immediately register as being different from E1 - the graphics and the controls. E2's enhanced visuals give it an atmosphere that drips from your monitor. The sense of fear, the sense of absolute involvement, the sense that your own life is in constant danger, is created brilliantly and maintained throughout. Truly, E2 is up there with Tomb Raider or SkyNet in the atmosphere stakes. And, speaking of stakes, there are plenty of them lying about - often protruding from the now-still chests of the numerous mutilated bodies soaking in pools of

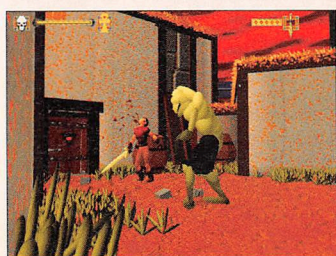
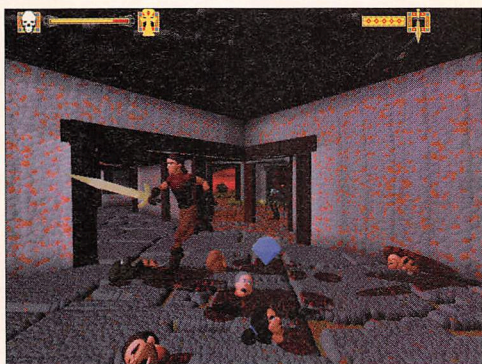


Combat is simplified by cinematic camera angles, but is still raw and bloody.

their own blood that litter the castle grounds.

Thanks to the new 640x400 resolution E2 looks wonderful. Everything is so sharply defined and the detail on the ground, the walls, the plants, even down to the straw scattered on the floor of the barns, is, well, it's just so very considerate of Mr Spencer. The architecture and level design is great and

offers a thoughtfully non-linear structure. Towers loom menacingly out of the screen, stairways run hither and thither, rooms connect up all over the place, a moat snakes its way across the entire play area and, with huge open courtyards to tiny forgotten rooms, there's a good deal of variety in the size of the different sections. Although, in some of the larger areas the camera is



Be prepared, Ecstática 2 is an exceedingly violent game - gloriously so in fact. That's life in the Dark Ages for you...

often placed so far away that your character can be as little as 1cm tall. Sure, the view looks cool and dramatic, but it can be tough to work out what's happening. But that's just a minor niggle, don't worry about it too much. In fact, it's a problem that is instantly cancelled out by the way these long wide views let you see other parts of the castle that you can't get to at that precise moment. It's really nice to be able to catch a glimpse of, lurking in the background, the places you've been to already and those you've yet to visit - it lets you realise how everything does connect up and makes sense. Giving you, quite literally, a sense of perspective.

Tricky views

Unfortunately, E2 still suffers from the camera switching faults that plagued its predecessor and others like Alone In The Dark. It's not that you get lost behind objects as sometimes happened in those earlier games; it's that you don't feel as if you can see as much as you should from the fixed camera views. This doesn't affect the gameplay (you will certainly never blunder blindly into a sudden

death situation because of it), but, in these post-Tomb Raider times, it does feel a tad restricting. Often I found myself accidentally moving

to the unseen designated limits of a particular view in the heat of battle, and as such was forced to wait a few seconds while the new one popped up. This stop-start nature is a health hazard, and occasionally resulted in me mistiming a swing and copping a club to the stomach.

Which leads me neatly into the main aspect of E2 - combat. E2 is very combat heavy. Now, if you played E1 you would probably recall that it had only two attacking moves - clearly not enough for a satisfying bout. E2 improves the

situation a little by offering a lunge, an extravagant swipe, a round-kick, a pivoting reverse swing, and tumbles to the four points of the compass. (Just as an aside, when is someone going to release a game like this - a fighting/adventure crossover - with the depth in

moves of, say, Virtua Fighter? Please, I would really appreciate it). While the range of moves might be limited, there's no denying how astoundingly well they are animated. It's that ellipsoid technology, you see. The curves, solid and muscular, give a genuinely human look to all your actions.

There is none

of the jerkiness or rigidity common to polygon-based characters. Movement is exaggerated to excellent effect, each creature appearing so lithe and athletic. The way the monsters die, staggering, falling to their knees, as if in awe of your

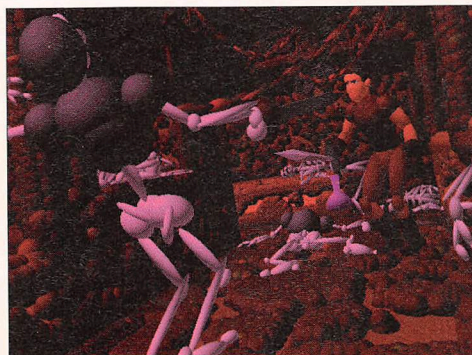
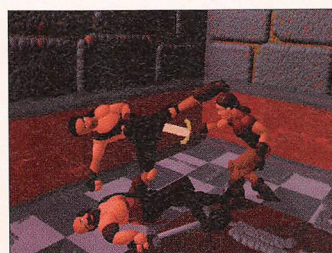
masterful swordsmanship, before collapsing in a heap at your feet, is utterly superb.

Combat sensitive

All up, it's nearly enough to make you, if not forget, then at least overlook E2's main failing. The controls aren't the best, to be honest. Sure, they're an improvement upon E1, which didn't even let you turn whilst running! But, still, they should be better yet. The trouble is that when you want to move the control is oversensitive (you tap the key once to walk, tap it slightly longer to run - inevitably you find yourself holding the key down too long and end up taking ages to walk through a door or, more tragically, plummeting to your death from a narrow ledge), yet when you want to fight the control is unresponsive (you have to press the key for just that fraction too long for comfort - so, you often don't make an attack because you've released the key too quickly and not waited for the animation to catch up). You'll get used to these idiosyncrasies, but it'd be better if you didn't have to.

Finally, I'm so glad that the ingenious and totally unique inventory system was retained. Ecstática 2 is a slightly missed opportunity, but a damn fine game, nonetheless.

David Wildgoose



The cut scenes utilise the in-game graphics style - gotta love those ellipsoids!

Stone Troll



86%

Category Action
Players 1
Publisher Psygnosis
Price \$89.95
Rating M15+
Available Now

For Macabre, striking visuals. Cool animation. Audacious, convoluted level design.

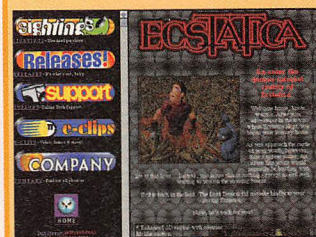
Against Slightly confusing view switches. Better controls needed.

Need P90, 8Mb (DOS)
16Mb (Win 95)

Want Nothing special.

+ **Plus**

<http://www.psygnosis.com/>



QUAKE MISSION PACKS

2 new Quake addons, one brilliant, one average, both official iD products. You love Quake, you waited for this, you need them. Read on...

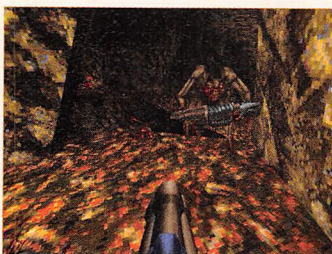
Quake Mission pack 1: Scourge of Armagon

This new addition to the Quake repertoire is a delicious combination of new levels, new environment effects, new monsters (!) and new weapons and bonuses.

Rather than re-invent the way Quake works, Activision have cleverly integrated a series of impressive new features which complement and complicate existing code.

New weapons

The new weapons are simple, logical and great. The empty socket where Doom 2 players yearned for a plasma rifle have been blessed with the inclusion of the Laser Cannon. It fires a volley of energy bolts into a passageway from side-on, and the shots will ricochet off each wall in an electric frenzy and toast anything hiding in there. It also has a nasty rate of fire. It is the most fun of all the Quake weapons to date. Another weapon added to the arsenal is the Mjolnir, which is a dirty big hammer (not unlike the Warrior's weapon from Hexen), but when you strike a wall or the floor with it, you get multiple rays of lightning surging out from that point directly into your enemies, who are understandably toasted. And final-



A gremlin with a stolen gun.



One of the new guns - the laser rifle.



Now that we're all Quake Masters Activision have seen fit to include some impossibly difficult situations in the addon.

ly, on the sneaky, strategic side, we have the Proximity Mine Layer. This looks like a red grenade launcher which basically shoots grenades encased in silly putty, or something which makes them stick to the walls, floor and roof where they land. There they stay until something moves nearby, and they detonate with the strength of an ordinary bomb. They would be a great way to make deadly traps in multiplayer, if only they had a smaller sphere of sensitivity and a larger payload.

New monsters

The new monsters are thankfully fierce, original and impressive. The Centroid is a giant scorpion on about 2 metres long which has 2 nailguns grafted into its pincers. They move at great speed, pepper you with barrages of nails at long range, are impossible to hit with explosives (they strafe very intelligently) and axe you with their tail stinger when close up.

The other newcomer in this pack is the Gremlin,

whilst bearing no resemblance to the creatures from the Steven Spielberg film, are an excellent addition. They look like crumpled little goblin things which hop about quickly and can resurrect their dead, and also heal themselves from the bodies

of their kindred. The main thing you will notice is the way they steal your weapons. Yep, you heard me.

Midway through an intense conflict a message appears: "Gremlin stole your rocket launcher". Suddenly you are rudely disarmed to the shotgun, as you see the Gremlin in question hobbling away with a distinctive Quake soldier's gun in its wiry little arms. Taking offense, you charge out of the fray, pinning the munchkin angrily with the feeble spray from your recreational bird shooter. The Gremlin whips about, and you gasp in horror as a hail of



The Boss seems tough at first, but falls quickly to lasers.

rockets blows you and the surrounding monsters into cyber-chunks.

New landscape

The new levels are superbly detailed, and are reminiscent of something from Duke Nukem in the attention to minutiae. Not to mention the tweaked physical versatility of the environment. In particular, one level is staged inside a disused mine, with rail tracks and old fill carriages featuring a spectacular roof cave-in which then becomes static, and the pleasantly clichéd Indiana Jones rolling rock chase down a steep decline. Other new elements include



New textures on old monsters. A disappointingly easy solution to the problem of making it new.

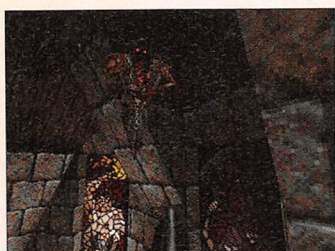
force fields (which allow lasers to pass through) and shimmering energy walkways which can be activated and shut off instantly. Predictably, the traps have also been beefed up. Underwater turbines, lightning traps and strange rotating tubes not unlike a spin-dryer filled with blades and tumbling boulders (!) offer sudden and irreversible death.

New bonuses

The new bonuses are fairly unexciting, comprising: the Horn of Conjuring, which "summons" a random Quake monster which will fight at your side until destroyed, the Empathy Shield, which causes enemies nearby to take equivalent damage to your own, and the Wetsuit, a fairly redundant device which offers air supply, speed underwater and immunity from lightning.

Quake Mission pack 2: Dissolution of Eternity

Okay, so here we have "Quake in Ancient Egypt". This sort of fits, considering the excess of rock tunnels, weird traps and runey hieroglyphic stuff that Quake normally has. It's a bit like playing Quake inside a big museum,



New monster - the wraith.

with paintings eons old adorning the walls, and the Death Knights re-textured to look like stone statues - which is sometimes what they are!

General Environment

There are, obviously, heaps of new textures to make the walls and artifacts look good. The Egyptian thematic is carried off quite well, as far as the environment is concerned. There is a plethora of sarcophagus's, giant Sphinx heads, shrines and pyramids. There are numerous unique textures which only pertain to one object, which shows the amount of work that has gone into the level construction.

New monsters

There are two new monsters that occur throughout the levels: Electric eel fish things, which effectively replace the piranha things we used to have, and hovering grim-reaper shadowhooded-glowing-red-eyed dudes who shoot vore-identical (but red) exploding spikeballs that heatseek their target. Both really just new graphics on top of patched existing code. That is, the Reaper character could easily be the movement code from the hovering lizard guys in original Quake, and his projectiles could be ripped from the man-spider monsters, again from original Quake. So no big excitement there.

The other new monsters we have

are all end-of-level bosses, which appear only once. The boss sequences are alike in that there is always a central monster who spawns copies of himself, which are much easier to kill but still attack and cause confusion.

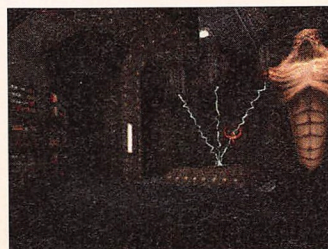
New weapons

Regarding the new weapons. Firstly, the nail weapons have a

new ammo which you can elect to use whenever necessary: Lava Nails. These obviously do more damage than regular nails, but we are expected to believe that the projectiles are made of stone which is miraculously preserved at melting point (over 3,000 degrees C). The next thing of note is the "multiple" Bomb ammo, which when fired from the grenade launcher, becomes a cluster bomb which spreads into 5 normal sized



Get the beasties to fight among themselves!



Lightning trap.

bombs and causes mass chaos and carnage. This is actually quite good. Same can be said for when you fire those out of the rocket launcher. They become a formation of 4 simultaneously launched rockets which all hit the target(s) simultaneously.

The last weapon change is an alternative lightning weapon, the perhaps ineptly termed Plasma Gun uses separate ammo that fires short, condensed blasts of energy in a zap, which erupts into an explosion of electricity at the contact point.

New bonuses

The new bonuses are mostly forgettable, like the anti-grav belt, which predictably makes you sail into the air and drift slowly down, etc. And the shareware brilliance that is the grappling hook is scheduled for inclusion in the final release.

Eddie Dawson



Lava nails vs. ogres.

Scourge of Armagon

85 %

Publisher	Roadshow/Activision
Price	\$49.95
Rating	MA15+
Available	Now

A great improvement on Quake, with clever compensation for all of Quake's shortcomings. The new monsters will blow you away! Literally. If Quake still holds appeal then this is for you.

Dissolution of Eternity

72 %

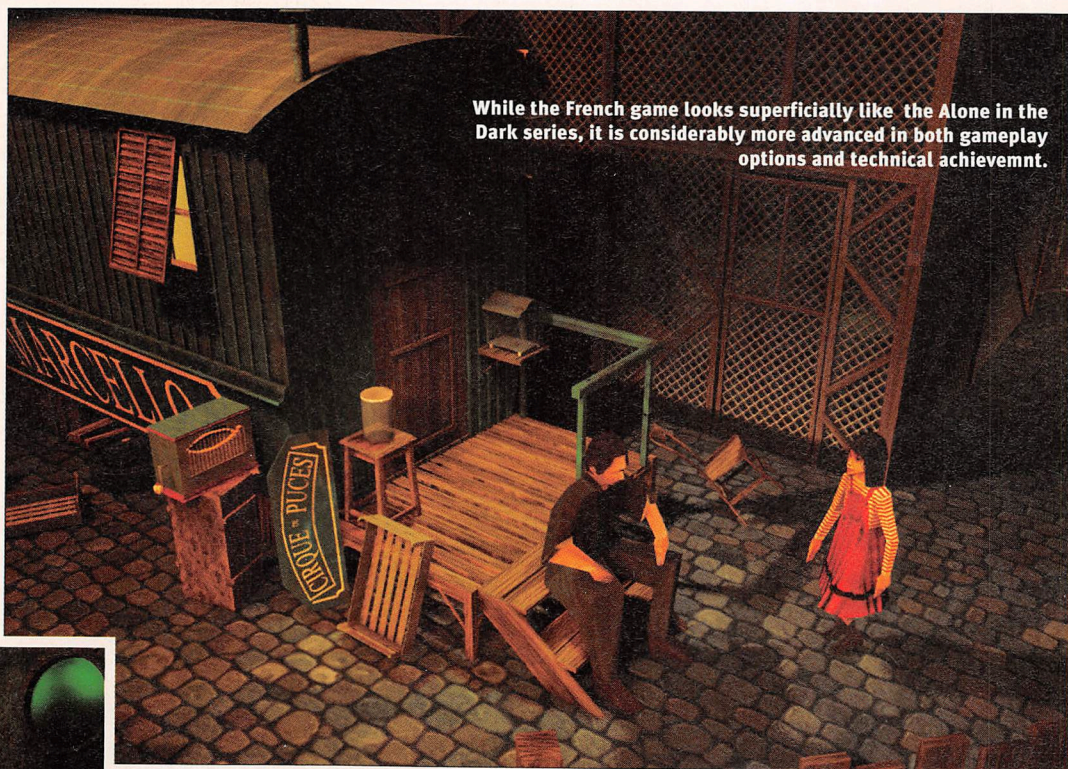
Publisher	Roadshow/Activision
Price	\$49.95
Rating	MA15+
Available	Now

Aside from the interesting new graphics and it's overall prettiness, to play this pack feels almost exactly like regular Quake, while trying to be something quite different. Not enough departure from the plain vanilla to attract much attention.

THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN

The prospect of a dark and twisted adventure game becomes even more enticing when it is based on a film like *The City Of Lost Children*.

It's hard to get excited about games based on, or inspired by, big budget films. More often than not, these tend to just horribly stink. All license and no substance. Fact. There are exceptions of course,



While the French game looks superficially like the *Alone in the Dark* series, it is considerably more advanced in both gameplay options and technical achievement.



(left) **Miette** is a character you really begin to care about. This is something designers strive for but rarely achieve.

but these are very few and these tend to be only better than average. However, hearing that an adventure game based on Juenet & Caro's *The City of Lost Children* was to be released early 1997, one reviewer at least got very excited. And why? One thing that's lacking in the adventure genre is the number of more mature or adult-orientated games. While colourful and humorous adventure titles can be a lot of fun, there's not much of an alternative. One begins to wonder why more developers haven't jumped off the bandwagon and brought us a title with a real dark, sinister edge that has you enthralled from start to finish. Okay, so there are a couple of "adult" adventure games out there, but these tend to be a little crass or rely

too much on shock-value to push them into the adult niche. What is needed is an adult game that is driven by strong plot and interesting subject matter, with a little help from stunning visual presentation.

Bizarre struggle of human nature

The film's creators, Jenet & Caro, know their cinema. Their previous film, *The Delicatessen*, was an outstanding effort. The cinematography (it does wonders ya know) was breathtaking and the plot captivating. With *The City of Lost Children* though, J&C created a masterpiece. Without wanting to sound too much like *The Movie Show*, it must be said that the film was a feast for the senses, with some of the most trippy visuals ever seen. The story while

bizarre, dealt well with human nature and struggle. To give a brief description so that the game can be better understood, a scientist named Krank is unable to dream, with the side effects of this disability tragic. Krank kidnaps children and has them brought (care of some freaky servants) to his oil rig/industrial island so that he can tap in to their minds and quench his youthful desires. Meanwhile, a burly man going by the name of One is on the search for his younger brother, Denree, which was one of Krank's most recent victims. On his search he meets up with the young Miette, a girl with a rather sketch background (an orphan with very light fingers). Together they set out to get back Denree and the others. Along the way they come across

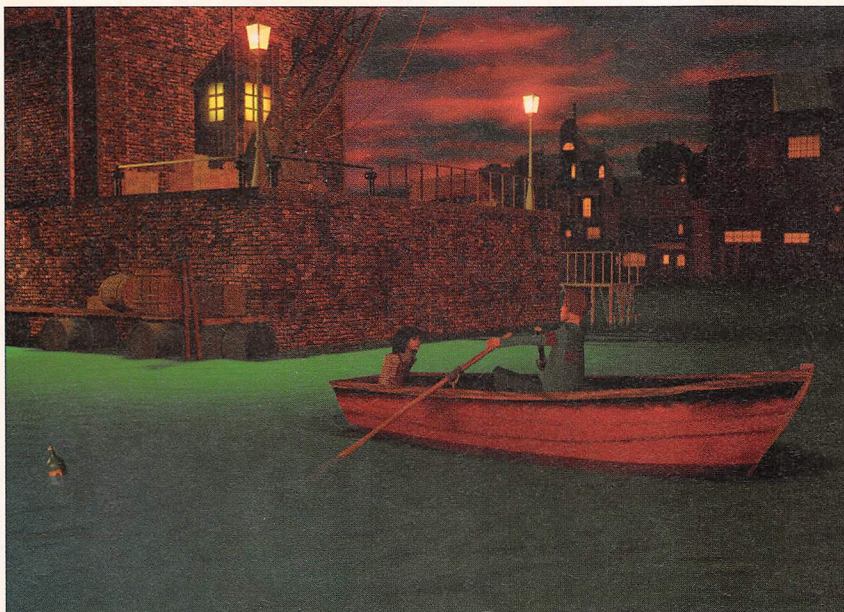
plenty of strange and scary characters, and develop a rather special relationship.

Spectacular visuals

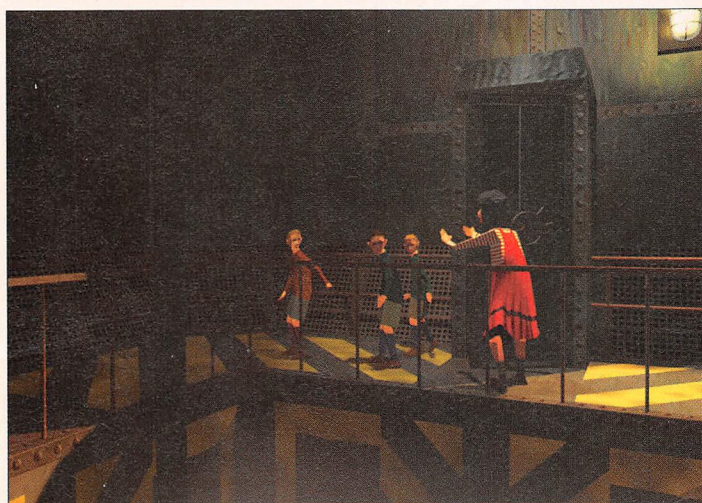
As far as visuals go, *The City of Lost Children* is spectacular. The developers have stuck at it and got it almost perfect. A futuristic environment with a very strong industrial revolution theme is the setting for the adventure, and everything looks positively beautiful. The game world is fairly large too, with quite a number of



Seems we have a Plot Development on our hands.



Sitting on the dock while you play.



(above) The dark and brooding atmosphere sees Miette in a host of dangerous situations. (below) Miette has a surprising range of movements and skills.

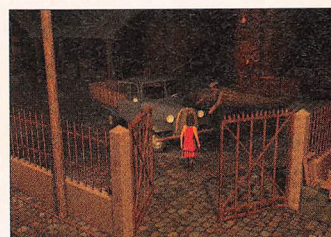
locations to visit on your way to meet Krank. Marc Caro (one half of the creative effort behind the film) was on hand during the development of the game to help create a feel as close as possible to the film, and it shows: Tall, fort-like buildings, squalid residences, garbage lying around (in fact it could be any major European city). Adventure game rule number one: said adventure may not rely on visuals alone to captivate the gamer, rather, requires a strong sense of plot,

storyline and control with graphics being the icing on the proverbial cake. This is foremost where *The City of Lost Children* loses its sheen. You play the part of Miette, and after about thirty seconds of guiding her around you'll start to get that horrible feeling of something gone majorly wrong. Was it that too much time, budget or effort was spent on the backgrounds and visuals? Possibly, but there can be no excuse that Miette moves around like a very

sedated farm animal. Firstly, Miette moves around way TOO slow. It's like watching someone doing their best attempt at a space walk. There is a run button, and this speed is a little more respectable - but why didn't they set Miette's default speed at run and save us a lot of frustration? Also, in

performing the various actions required, Miette is also suffering major motor disabilities. When climbing stairs, the character first lines herself in front of the stairs, stops, takes a few practice steps and then slowly makes her way up or down them. The same goes for any other change in direction, action or reaction. Yech! Talk about putting you off yer kippers! It's boring, frustrating and unacceptable! Nicely animated 3D characters and spiffy backgrounds just aren't enough!

Cinema to adventure game crossover rule number one: if based on a film - don't assume that everyone playing said game has seen it! It seems bloody obvious, but it's still overlooked. Sadly, this game has forgotten this aspect too. If you've seen the film, you'll get more enjoyment out of the game because you'll have a better idea of what's going on. If you haven't, the *City of Lost Children* leaves only a bare skeletal account of the plot of the film, and



The town is full of rich characters.

without the plot, this game comes across as a little drab and some of the puzzles a little trivial. You do meet some of the bizarre characters from the film, but their dialogue is dry and worse, minimal. Why the hell are you breaking into peoples huts? Do you need this bone? Yes, you need everything you can pick up and you're breaking into the hut because you were told to, and if you don't, you won't get anywhere. Hardly captivating, eh? *The City of Lost Children* is most disappointing in that it showed plenty of potential,

yet failed to deliver. It's not a completely bad adventure, and is a welcome change to some other titles out there. As far getting some enjoyment or satisfaction out of it - consider this analogy: if you're the type that doesn't enjoy watching foreign films on SBS, you probably won't enjoy playing this either.

March Stepnik

74%

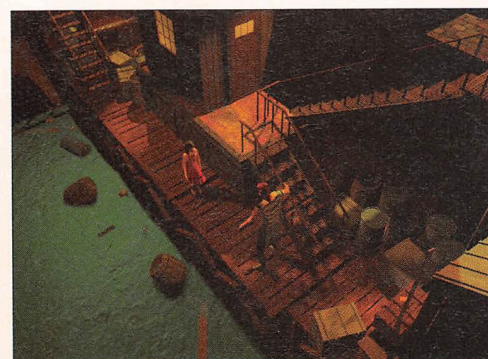
Category Adventure
Players 1
Publisher Psygnosis
Price \$79.95
Rating G8+
Available Now

For Stunning visuals. Based on the film by Jeunet & Caro.

Against Horrible character control. Plot is somewhat lost in the translation. As a result, some of the tasks seem trivial.

Need P90, 8Mb RAM

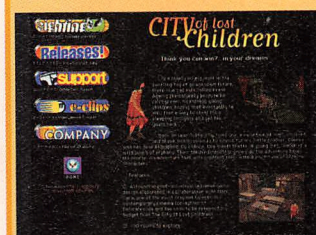
Want P133, 16Mb RAM, fast video



The viewpoints are beautifully cinematic yet useful.

Plus

<http://www.psygnosis.com>



THEME HOSPITAL

Resource management takes a fresh new twist with the Midas touch of Bullfrog.



Theme Hospital is the sequel (of sorts) to Theme Park. I won't beat around the bush - while Theme Park was a whole lot of fun to play and refreshingly unique, it had a few flaws that prevented it from hitting that echelon of being a classic. What was Theme Park about? Simple. To make money (by of course, building the most awesome fun park). The gauge of your success was the amount of visitors (happy visitors meant a good reputation and thus more ticket sales, while those unhappy kept sales down to a minimum) coming to your park, which directly translated into the size of your bank balance. The graphics were cute, the animations were cute, even the sound cute (cute can also mean annoying in this case). For all intents and purposes though, you could consider Theme

Park the prequel, or at least a practice run on the road to Theme Hospital. For Theme Hospital is a slick title. Very slick indeed. It's taken the better elements of Theme Park, tweaked them, then absolutely saturated these in an amazing amount of detail.

Virtual receptionists and nurses

Theme Hospital is a more grown up affair than Theme Park (in the same way that turning 18 means that you are an adult). Rather than cutesy little kids that cry when their balloons pop (or their bladders too), Theme Hospital deals with the sick and diseased. Bring on all ye that have gout, superfluous nipples or giant boils! While there is a shift in subject matter, the basic gameplay of Theme Park remains intact. You are out to create, maintain, and improve

the best hospital you can. You start off with an empty building, some spare change from the bank, and a little helper to guide you along the delicate process of constructing a thriving metropolis of micro-bacteria and disease. You'll need a receptionist, a doctor's office (to diagnose patients), a pharmacy department, a ward, toilets, drink machines, a staff room, and more.



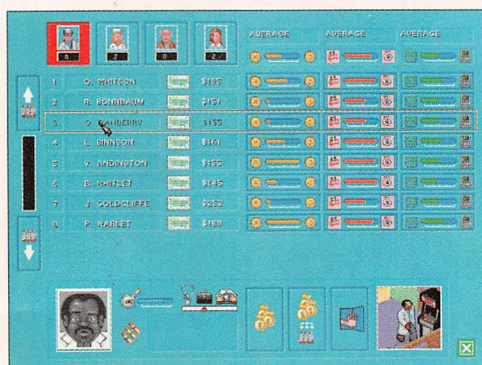
I'm getting sick of that tile pattern...

You can furnish your hospital with plants, seats, windows, heaters and the like. And what is the benefit of it all?

Well, Theme Hospital is as much about inter-relationships as it is about money. Almost everything is related or connected, with one thing affecting another way down the line. Therefore, good planning should always start from the very beginning. However, Theme Hospital isn't unforgiving - you can almost always correct a situation or shuffle a few things around to prevent you from hitting any dead ends. For example, when it comes to dragging

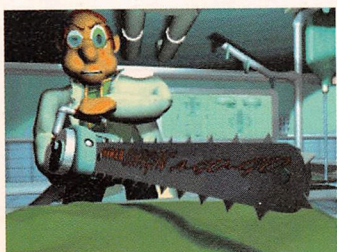


The little people all head off for their destinations. Zoom in and watch their funny stuff.



Mess around with the charts and graphs to keep that ultra-productivity steaming along.

out the floor plan of the doctor's office, you have to choose whether you want the office large or small. A small office saves on space (which can be used for other purposes), whereas a larger office makes the doctor feel more important (therefore less likely to strike or demand a pay increase). After laying down the room, you can always resize it, depending of course on the limitations of the space around. Benches provides seating for the sick, and increase the patients opinion of the hospital (no one likes to stand around waiting). Windows make the place more alive, while adequate heating and food services keep people happy (which means more money!). Plants filter the air, and improve the overall appearance of your hospital. However, if your



The intro is a winner. Damn funny.

handymen are sloppy, and don't keep up with the watering, the plants will wither and produce a negative effect (people won't like it). The staff are also rather dynamic. From the start you know they're character (oh, it's Suzi. She likes to stage dive but she is so friendly).

And very vigorous), be it lazy, friendly, hard-working or just plain wacko. The better staff will demand more pay if they are not happy (or even just greedy), so keeping a suite of highly professional doctors can be very expensive. If you choose to keep too many imbeciles, you'll invariably have to cop the flak for the number of times your surgeon sews foreskin onto patients noses, or at worse, the number of "accidental" deaths that occur. This game is all a constant juggle between managing your income with your expenditure.

Cutesy SVGA graphics

Where Theme Hospital succeeds is in the detail, both in graphics and in events. In reality, hospitals can be fairly depressing places (it has to do with people dying and all that). Naturally, Bullfrog have approached almost all aspects of hospital life with tongue in cheek, so worry not! There



The advisor helps it all make sense at first, then when you know what's what, ditch the dude.

are diseases like The Squits (er, frequent toilet usage), Hairytis (too much hair), even a King Complex (thinking you are Elvis - isn't that already a real disease?). Their treatment's are equally amusing. Bloating Head is cured by popping the head, then blowing it up with a pump. And you can see it all happen

before your very eyes. Sick patients wander around, walk away dejected when there is a large queue for the specialist, go for a drink from the machine when thirsty, visit the toilet when necessary, pay the doctor when done. All in SVGA. While the detail is awesome, the graphics still take on the trademark cutesy style of Theme Park, though much sharper and more generic. Keeping track of all the commotion is much more user friendly than in Theme Park too. Theme Park left the user feeling somewhat confused, even daunted by all the finer details, especially the customer AI. Theme Hospital has everything laid out well, in an organised and logic way, so that making the best of Bullfrog's amazing AI is a much easier task - you actually know what is going on! Theme Park was also lacking in the objective department. How did one finish a game of Theme Park? By either failing to bankruptcy or getting bored. Theme Hospital now has missions, and the end result is fantastic! These all have specific objectives, and get harder and harder to meet down the track. Emergencies, new equipment, time limits and the like are all wait-

ing further in the game. When you finish a mission, you can either choose to stay and continue playing around, or move on to the next - a great solution to Theme Park's inherent flaw.

Theme Hospital is a very rewarding game. It definitely has a hook - managing a score of things at once, admiring the amazing detail and AI the Bullfrog have put into the game, all while doing what's most natural to human beings, trying to make money, has a definite charm. It's bloody entertaining too. A resource management game with a very humorous undertone.

March Stepnik

+ Plus

<http://www.bullfrog.co.uk/>
 or
<http://www.ea.com>

THEME HOSPITAL

Theme Park is one of the most selling games of all time - nearly a million copies sold, and in the charts, for nearly two years since it was released. Bullfrog's Theme Park was the day-to-day running of an amusement park, while Theme Hospital is the day-to-day running of a hospital. Building is easy in Theme Hospital, applying Theme Park's fantastic gameplay to the everyday running of your very own hospital.

90%

Category	Sim/Strategy
Players	1-4
Publisher	EA/Bullfrog
Price	\$79.95
Rating	G
Available	Now

For A wonderfully addictive game that is amass with detail and fun.

Against The music is horrible. The graphics while high-res, are a little too plain looking and drab.

Need

Want Nothing more special

MAGIC THE GATHERING: BATTLEMAGE

Acclaim's interpretation of the card game lacks finesse or refinement, but is big on originality...

We here at PowerPlay have high regard for the health and well being of you the reader. In light of this concern I feel obliged to warn people not yet addicted... Oops, "involved" with the Magic The Gathering phenomena. At first glance the actual card game seems innocent enough. Numerous cards each representing various spells, which you then proceed to collect and in the process construct personal decks to battle other players cards. The innocence is soon lost. An empty bank balance will soon be your normal state of affairs, followed by obsessive travels around gaming stores looking for "just one more" rare and powerful card. Greatly enjoyable, but say goodbye to your "normal" life... you have been warned. On top of this, Acclaim now try to destroy what remains of we Magic Player's tattered social lives with the release of Magic The Gathering Battlemage.

Authentic cards in real time combat

Magic players will feel quite at home when first loading up the game. The cards on offer include a selection from the 4th Edition and Mirage sets, all reproduced with



While the real-time combat elements of Acclaim's Magic differ greatly from the Microprose game, it still retains the detail that lovers of the card game will be familiar with.

attractive artwork. You then construct your own personal decks from the cards on offer, or choose from the many pre-made decks included with the game. It's then off to the battlefield, where

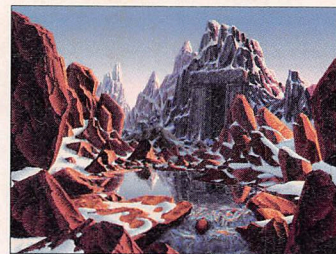
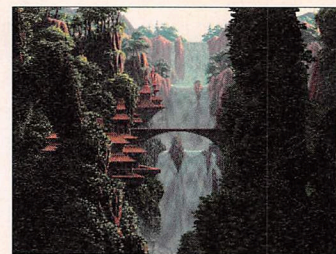
Acclaim's twist on the Magic theme becomes apparent. Instead of presenting a turn based sim of the card game, what we have on offer is real time/overhead spell casting action. You start

the battle with seven cards and proceed to play land, thus gaining Mana (source of power) and cast various spells. When casting a spell, your wizard waves his arms about and then you actually see the results

of your efforts on the battlefield. You'll soon see Shivan Dragons battling your opponents Nightmares, even a disenchant spell flying across the battlefield to destroy your enemies Circle of Protection. Each ten

seconds a new card will be placed in your hand, and since you can't hold more than seven cards at once, your mouse and keyboard will soon go into turbo mode. This real time implementation of Magic is a brave move by Acclaim, and full points for originality. The problem is that it doesn't quite come together well, because of some very annoying problems.

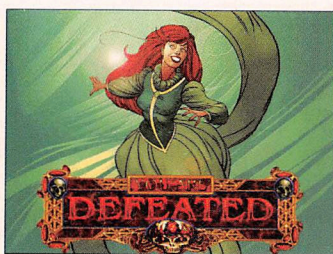
As soon as you get past the great



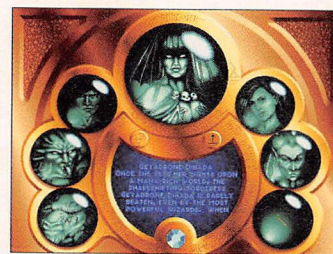
As was expected, the pretty bits are truly outstanding.

intro and fanciful menu screens, the poor graphics of the main battlefields are a big letdown. The two duellists, plus their spells are all tiny and are often hard to tell apart. The mighty looking Serra Angel looks like a deformed eagle, and too many creatures look like coloured blobs. There is a zoom feature, but it restricts your view and makes everything go blocky. Not only was it disappointing to see the once feared Force of Nature reduced to the graphical equivalent of a piece of green mucus, but on a battlefield

filled with creatures it adds confusion to the game. After some time it gets easier identifying various creatures, but the quality of the graphics really detracts from the whole experience.



The "you're a loser" screen.



Balance character attributes carefully.

New interface please!

One of the biggest problems with Battlemage, is the Mt Everest learning curve involving the controls and general interface. Even



though each spell cast is verbally announced by the sexy computer voice, you can't identify the opposing Wizard's spells by clicking on them. This leads to many mysterious objects on the battlefield. Sure after time you get to recognise everything, but lots of frustration is guaranteed in the mean time. A simple identifier option would

have been greatly appreciated. Coupled with this is a control system that generally has that "dipped in glue" feeling. Trying to target a fireball at an enemy creature, with an unresponsive cursor while it's running at you, and while worrying about your other spells will lead to high blood pressure.

Battlemage isn't all horror and problems though. There are two game modes to choose from, one being a straight duel mode as described above. The other is a campaign mode where you strive to conquer territories in the land of Corondor. The more territories you obtain, the more spells you get. It mainly centers around simplistic "pick the right response" conversations but it's a nice bonus



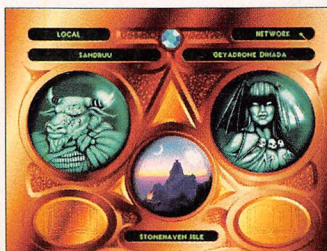
Conjuring demons for fun and profit.



Acclaim's Magic features real-time strategy combat, but the interface - so important to this style of game, is a sad let down.



Combat in full swing.



Choose your next card.

as it adds a nice touch of atmosphere. A multiplayer feature including modem and network play is included, a welcome addition to any game. Internet play is advertised on the box, but small print explains that a patch will be forthcoming for net play. Small print, hmmm...

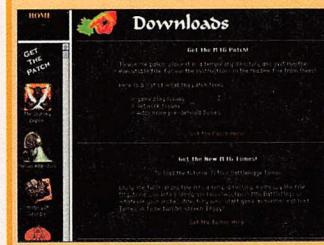
After a few days of playing and getting used to the problems associated with controls etc, Battlemage becomes more enjoyable. Constructing decks and then watching them unfold in real time combat is a worthwhile twist to the Magic experience. Magic newbies on the otherhand will have a very tough time with this game, which could have been rectified with better controls, shame really. An interesting but far from perfect addition to the Magic scene.

Peter Sharpe

Plus

<http://www.acclaimnation.com> - Acclaim's web page. Great for grabbing some extra pre-made decks. Keep an eye out for upcoming expansions for Battlemage, Acclaim say extra cards are on the way. Fingers crossed.

Patch info -latest patch at time of writing is 1.1a, download it from Acclaim's site and things run a lot smoother.



71%

Category	Real Time Action
Players	1-4
Publisher	Acclaim
Price	\$89.95
Rating	G8+
Available	Now

For A new welcome addition to the style of playing Magic. Captures atmosphere and spirit of the game.

Against Very difficult to get to grips with. Not a lot of cards included with game, only a few Mirage and most of 4th Edition.

Need P75, 16Mb RAM, 2MB DirectX Vid Card, Win95

Want P90, 4 x CD-ROM

MAGIC THE GATHERING

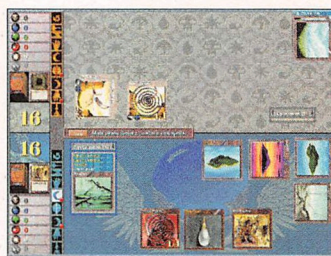
MicroProse finally come through. This is the strategy game all Magic card freaks have been waiting so desperately for.

Many moons ago, when MicroProse initially announced that development had begun on a detailed PC sim of Magic: The Gathering, many Magic fans labelled it vapourware right from the start. After all, the card game involves infusing personal playing tactics into a near endless number of card combinations and strategies. Many thought at best it would be a programmer's nightmare, at worst a title that would be stuck in development limbo. When long

delays began to occur it was looking like another promising game had been slain by the dreaded vapourware beast. Happily the delays are over and it's time to go card crazy.

Create mythical decks

Those more familiar with Magic will be pleased to not only see MicroProse has included cards from the 4th Edition, but twenty tasty and very highly sort after out of print cards. Those of us that could not stretch our finances to purchase a



In the midst of combat - exciting eh!

Black Lotus, Timewalk or a lovely set of Moxes can now indulge in creating decks based on these almost mythical cards. The other cards to grace the CD-ROM are the newly devised Astral Set. There are twelve in total and rely upon the computer to assign random variables. A favourite is the Aswan Jaguar, who picks a random monster type out of the enemy graveyard and can then bury that creature type when in play. What we don't have is any of the numerous expansion

sets, such as Ice Age and Mirage. After such a long time in development the lack of multiplayer is also a curious omission. MicroProse have stated that both expansion sets and multiplayer are forthcoming, the Magic world will await these VERY eagerly.

So you've watched the FMV tutorial, checked out all the cards and drooled over the potential of using that Lotus. It's time to jump into either the adventure scenario or straight into a duel. Both will have you involved in playing actual card games of magic, but with distinctly different flavours. The adventure element is set in the world of Shandalar. You step into the shoes of an apprentice wizard who has to save the Magically rich land from being taken over by a very nasty and shadowy sorcerer/cretin. Starting out with a basic set of Magic cards, you travel around the countryside duelling various Wizards and their



It may seem a bit confusing, but the basic idea is to trounce your opponent by preparing a deck with a well balanced set of skills, so you can take on all foes.



The main combat screen.

minions who have sold out to the new evil boy in town. Buying/Selling cards in the local villages and engaging in mini-quests are all part of the mission. The graphics might be "Ye olde style" but they do the job. Rather than having a tacked on feel, the adventure section is extremely well done and will have even the most experienced of Magic players trying out different deck construction and playing ideas. Gaming legend Sid Meier (of Civilisation fame) was part of the programming team and where Sid goes, quality isn't usually far behind.

Good looks and gameplay

The duelling arena is the meat of this game, as it's aim is to accurately simulate the card game's mechanics. The screen is divided into two sections, each representing a virtual tabletop. You can clearly see all the components that make up a game, such as your Library, Graveyard and cards in play. The interface is complex, but needed to be so as to accommodate all the possibilities that arise in your typical Duel. While it may be complex, it is all logical and configurable. Playing in at least 800x600 and 16 bit colour, everything especially the faithfully reproduced card



The point: conquering territories.

artwork looks fantastic. Duels flows along very smoothly with cards being shuffled, Mana being pumped into fireballs, monsters being activated for an attack or even perusing your enemies graveyard getting ready for an Animate Dead Spell.

Just when I thought MicroProse had sent me to a Utopian world where nothing could go wrong in a computer game, AI behaviour would sometimes jolt me back to reality.

Four difficulty levels are available, but even on the highest difficulty level the computer would sometimes get a bad case of the "Stupids". On one occasion tapping Mana, not having a spell ready and thus "Mana burning" out of the game. Other examples included stopping one of his own creatures regenerating and even discarding land when it could be played. On the otherside of the

coin, the computer can also play a devious and clever game. Often waiting for the right moment to cast a devastating hurricane, or take control of that powerful Sengir Vampire of yours. I've called my PC a few



The computer eases the workload.

choice names during some duels, so the AI can't be labelled as all that bad. At the end of the day it simulates everything from a human player having a bad Magic day to a very competent human. Please take note that even on a P150 the computer can occasionally take about 3 minutes to make a move. Slow Pentium or 486 users might be in for some slow games, but then human vs human games are not always lightning fast on many occasions.

In it's present form Magic The Gathering is a highly enjoyable and excellent game. Adventuring in Shandalar is addictive, and is a little world within itself always throwing up new situations and challenges. The practice of building decks for both yourself and the AI to try out, works wonderfully and the whole package just generally impresses. It's only the beginning though, when the multiplayer and Card expansions are released this game has the distinct possibility of becoming a gaming juggernaut.

Peter Sharpe



Even a pretend RPG inventory!



Managing your cards efficiently.



Original card art.

The 2 Magics

In one corner we have Battlemage by Acclaim, and in the other we have MicroProse and their Magic offering. Both are very different slants on the Magic theme, and this is no bad thing. Those seeking an accurate representation of the Card game can't go wrong with Magic by MicroProse. Battlemage appeals more to the arcade fraternity, as it forgoes turn based rules. If you want to see your Nightmare streaking across the battlefield in real time, Acclaim hope to see you with a copy of their game.

It comes as no surprise that both Acclaim and MicroProse aren't the best of friends, and both ended up in court squabbling about each other's version of Magic due to a confused licensing agreement. Gaming and lawyers, now there is an odd combination...

www.microprose.com

-Yep you guessed it, home base for MicroProse. You can download a demo of the game there as well, but the full version is much better.

rec.games.trading-cards.magic.strategy

-Newsgroup for Magic discussion. Deck ideas for Microprose's game are starting to appear. Go to work on that killer deck idea, and then tell the world!

91%

Category	Strategy
Players	1
Publisher	MicroProse
Price	\$TBA
Rating	TBA
Available	Now

For Succeeds brilliantly in bringing Magic the card game to the PC. Excellent adventure element.

Against No multiplayer as yet. Fairly heavy system requirements for a card based strategy game. More cards wanted, hopefully soon.

Need 486DX4/100, 16Mb RAM, WIN95, 4xCD-ROM, DirectX Vidcard, gomeg free HD

Want P100, 16-32Mb RAM, Vidcard Card that can handle 800x600 at 16Bit Colour.

THE TERMINATOR: SKYNET

While Quake steals the glory, Bethesda further refines the latest incarnation of the first true all-3D engine.

When the mighty Terminator: Future Shock was let loose upon the public midway through last year, its creators Bethesda were criticised by many for not including a multiplayer option. People, it seemed, were not content with a game that merely consisted of one of the best 3D graphics engines (still!), an atmosphere worthy of the two great Terminator movies, the first application of the now mandatory "mouse look" control, some brilliantly-devised missions crammed with clever and original ideas, and a massive arsenal of simply immense guns that has never been bettered since. And yet we wanted more.

So, Bethesda set to work upon SkyNet. A project that was, I believe, initially conceived to be a multiplayer add-on for Future Shock has now expanded into a fully-fledged game in its own right. SkyNet, then, is a true sequel - bigger and better than the first - and unquestionably the best game I have played this year.

Tis not a Doom-clone, laddie

For the uninitiated, SkyNet is a first-person 3D shoot 'em up. I hesitate to call it a "Doom clone" because that term implies certain things (ie. a complete lack of originality and a frantic, frenetic pace) that aren't appropriate for describing SkyNet. It has a strong, essential post-apocalyptic plot, for a start. The resistance movement led by John Connor, that you were such a vital part of in Future Shock, is now ready to make a critical strike upon the SkyNet computer system. In the one player game a series of eight

missions, each split into several lengthy sub-missions, awaits you, beginning with a reconnaissance of one of the SkyNet complexes.

After fighting my way along the mountain road that leads to the complex, taking out several silent homing globes, a party of nasty clomping raptors and an inconveniently placed laser turret with my own infra-red targeting laser rifle, and arriv-



Sniping from up high



The Complex - your goal in mission one. But how do you get inside?

ing just as the front gate closed, it soon dawned on me that the puzzle element of SkyNet was a heck of a lot greater than in Future Shock. I couldn't get in to the damn complex, you see. Although the solution to this problem is fairly obvious (just hitch a ride on one of the trucks stationed outside), later on they can get quite tricky and require a fair bit of searching or experimentation with buttons and computer panels. I was particularly pleased with myself after



The top left pic shows our hero taking a spin in his all-terrain jeep.

working out how to get inside the Cyberdyne building after discovering that access to its front door was

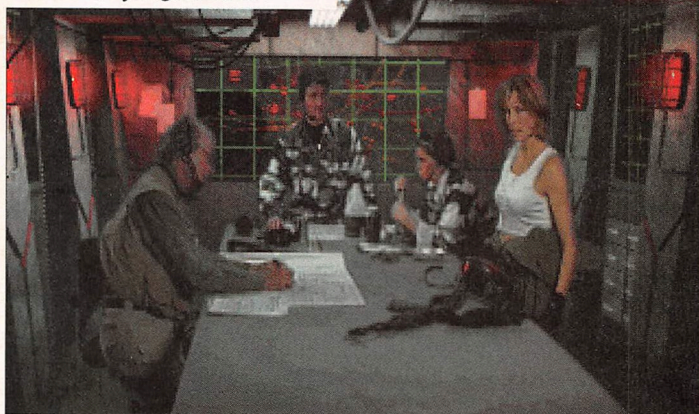


blocked by a deadly radioactive crater. All it required was a little lateral, no, "vertical" thinking. I had to make my precarious way onto the roof of a nearby skyscraper and knock over the surprisingly sturdy aerial placed there, which allowed me to jump across to Cyberdyne and enter via the rooftop elevator.

Superb level design

SkyNet is not a pure action game like Doom or Quake. It is best played at a slower pace, as you have to utilise any cover you can find. It's useful to take advantage of and hide behind the numerous wrecked cars or miniskips that litter the streets -

PRACTICAL STATISTICS



Mission briefing time - this time with real (i.e. dodgy) actors.



A parody of Duke Nukem?



Infra-red laser time

even then, a sneaky enemy can still blow up whatever you're using as protection and catch you in the resulting explosion. All buildings that have doors can be entered and scoured for extra ammo or medikits, while others that have had some walls destroyed can be climbed to gain a handy lookout or sniping position. The level of realism is quite fantastic. There are warehouses, cranes, and piers down by the harbour; there are whole sewer sys-

tems to be explored; when you enter a shop or office building or hotel it looks just as you would expect; there are highways to scream along in the jeep that you get to drive on a few levels; the inside of the submarine or the high-tech computer labs are very cool; you can run up the fire escapes on the sides of the tenement buildings; there's even a scene (as in the Stallone movie "Daylight") where you have to leap down a ventilation shaft with a huge fan in the

middle that will chop you to pieces if you're not careful. All up, the levels have been designed superbly, with plenty of invention and, importantly, interaction.

Basically, all I've said so far applies to both the single and multiplayer games. Deathmatching in SkyNet is, therefore, quite different to what you may have experienced in Doom or Quake. I'm not going to say that's it better or worse (because I love both), I'll just say that it's different. Again, SkyNet demands a more thoughtful approach here as well. I guess that it plays some-

what similarly to a game of Paintball or Skirmish. The diverse selection of weapons also caters for some individual styles of play, instead of there being a mad rush to be first to the rocket launcher and quad damage power-up. Due to the large size of some of the levels, each player is equipped with a motion tracker to locate any opponent on the move nearby. This is an excellent feature that adds a whole new level of strategy to death-matching. What happens when you have no reading on your tracker - is it because no one is there, or are they just lying in wait?

The only thing I think Bethesda neglected with multiplayer is the option for a co-operative game. I say this because my dream game is a kind of multiplayer 3D Syndicate, which is almost precisely what SkyNet would have been if they had have

included a co-operative mode. But still, what they have given me here is more than enough to be getting on with. The single player missions are tough and varied, as any game where you alternate between travelling on foot, on wheels, and in the air ought to be. While the multiplayer games, by nature, can be played forever.

Mmm, SkyNet, I love you...

David Wildgoose



(Top) You and a Termy re-enact a scene from every John Woo movie.

+ Plus

<http://www.bethsoft.com>
There's a patch there to

upgrade to v1.2



94%

Category	Action
Players	1-4
Publisher	Bethesda
Price	\$TBA
Rating	TBA
Available	Now

For Supremely well-designed. Action with subtlety and depth. A great 3D engine.

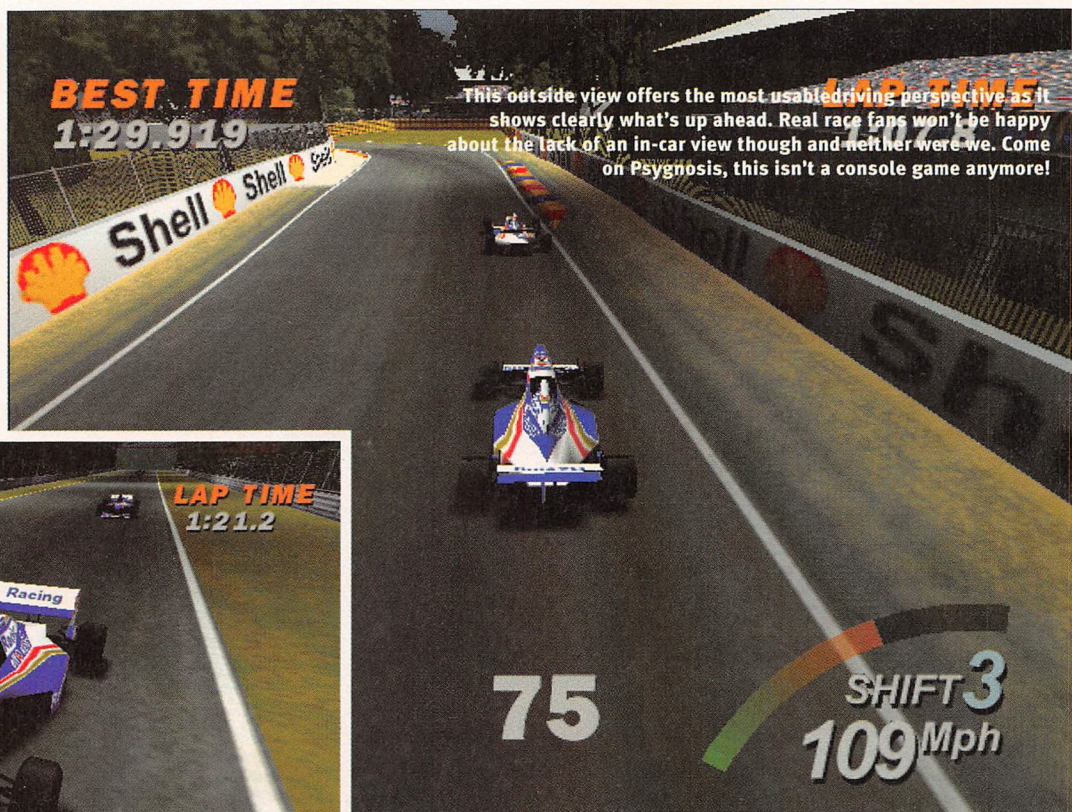
Against I want even more! Oh, and you still can't crouch and move.

Need 486/66, 8Mb RAM, 2xCD

Want P100, a good video card (for SVGA), Internet/Network

FORMULA 1

There are two kinds of Formula 1 fan - the anal purists who play GP2, and the fun lovers who watch only in the hope of a catastrophic accident. They play F1...



Formula 1 is the only motor sport that I like to watch, it's like a big stage show, full of dramatic twists and turns which are usually as entertaining as the race itself. What, for example, could be more fun than watching Damon Hills' new car drop its' guts on the parade lap in Melbourne, or seeing

Eddie Irvine take out the two race favourites on the first corner? F1 is big, incomprehensibly expensive and amazingly cool.

F1 for fun, GP2 for realism

Unless I'm very much mistaken this is the first Playstation to PC conversion undertaken by

Psygnosis, and what a fine job they've done too. A quick put-off line for lovers of Grand Prix 2: The designers of Formula 1 openly admit that their game is an inferior simulation, so if it's realism you want, stick to what you know. And if you don't have a 3Dfx accelerator in your

PC (why not?) this review is rather pointless as the game doesn't work without one. If you do have one you're probably bored with GLQuake and 3Dfx Tomb Raider by now and looking for something else to show off to your friends, and this is it! Formula 1 runs in 800X600 resolution in 16 bit colour, fully smoothed out at roughly 25-30 fps on a P133. The road surface looks amazing with very convincing rubber marks showing you the perfect driving line around each track. My favourite graphic effect though is the smoke that comes up from your front wheels when you lock them up, it looks so real you'll be waving it away from your face!

No "proper" view

Somewhat annoyingly, F1 has no true in-car cockpit view. There are a couple of attractive external views, if that's how you like to race, as well as a full-screen mode that curiously positions your chin just about on the ground. Pass other cars and



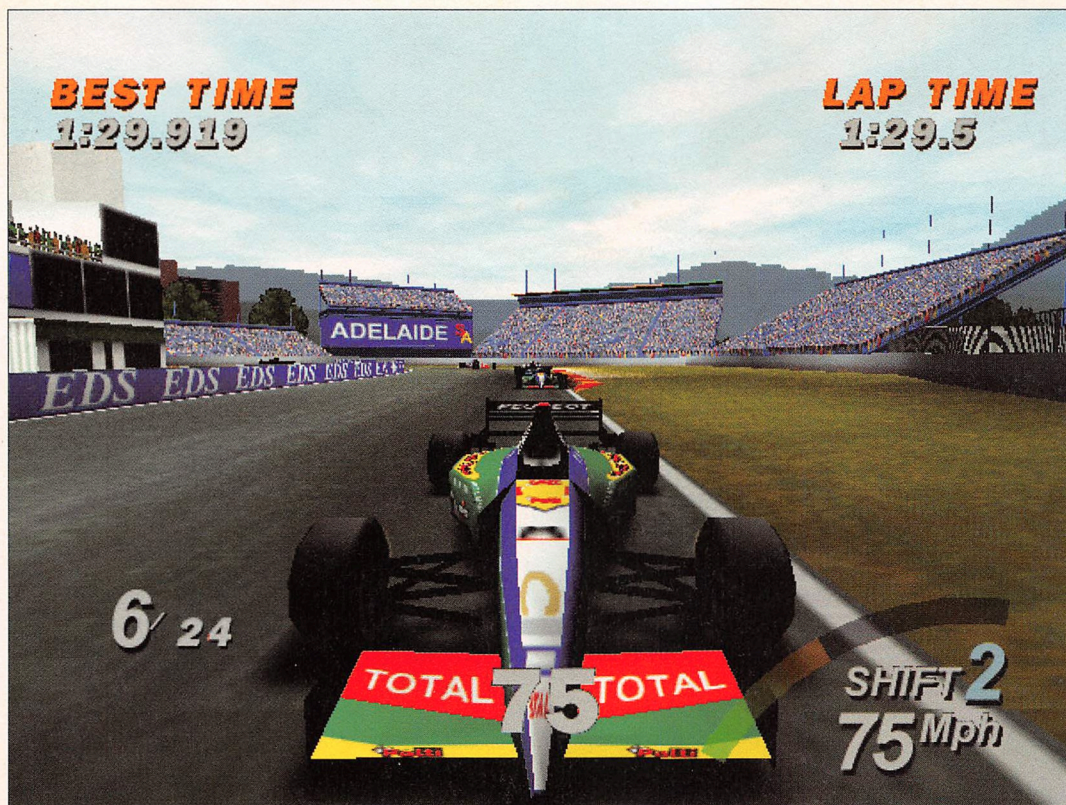
The 3Dfx-enhancements do look nice.

you'll be looking way up at their helmets. This view is completely useless as you just can't see what's coming up ahead. The closest you'll get to a "proper" view is also a bit dopey. As you can see from the screenshots it's like you're standing up inside the cockpit instead of sitting down, maybe you're trying to get attention, I don't know, but a standard in-car view would have been much better.

If you've seen the original PSX game then you aren't in for many surprises, it's pretty much exactly the same except it looks even better. Basically the game is divided into single race and championship



This is easily the best looking driving game around.



Each car has been modelled on the real thing. Even GP2 can't manage that - it just re-painted the same car shape.



Another very pretty but useless view mode.

modes, where you can either race on any track you choose or do the whole circuit, and between arcade or Grand Prix driving modes. The difference between the two driving modes is mainly in the handling of the car, especially when you go off the track. In arcade mode the car won't spin much

and doesn't do donuts everywhere when you hit the grass. In Grand Prix mode it does, a lot. You are also offered a choice of having steering and braking assistance to ease you into the drivers seat, they're good for complete beginners who don't want to be discouraged too early by not being able to stay on the road. Grand Prix mode is much more of a challenge in that your car handles more delicately and any spin or understeer that takes you off the road will

invariably result in you spinning round and round in circles trying to get back on again. You also get to practice on each track before qualifying, where you get the usual time limit. The arcade setting gives you one qualifying lap before each race, no practice.

What driver AI?

The areas where Formula 1 falls down the most are in the driver AI and in the way the pits are handled. The other drivers are basically coded to be complete bastards who never give you the right of way, even if you have it. They always follow their ideal driving line, even if it means going straight over the top of you. In arcade mode it doesn't matter so much, but when you're in Grand Prix mode, you're in front with one lap to go and some git flies straight into you from the other side of the track taking your rear wing off, it can really give you the shits. The pits are also too fiddly to use with any speed, it's too easy to accidentally end your pit session without having done anything, forcing you to finish the race by running out of fuel. Formula 1 is great for a bit of not too serious driving fun, it looks fab and sounds good too.

George Soropos



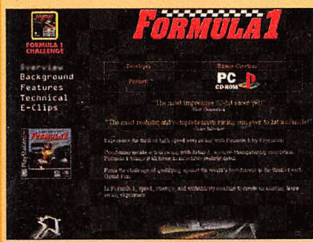
Gamers, you NEED a 3Dfx card, OK!



Plus

www.psygnosis.com

The planned Win 95 Direct3D version has been scrapped, with this native 3Dfx version being the only one you'll see. It's another blow for Microsoft's Direct3D standard and a strong testimony to the power of 3Dfx.



77%

Category	Arcade Racing
Players	1-2
Publisher	Psygnosis
Price	\$99.95
Rating	G
Available	Now

For Smooth, fast and sexy - and that's just Murray. Looks fabulous.

Against Dodgy opponent AI makes serious driving a pain.

Need Win95, P100, 16Mb RAM, 3Dfx based accelerator card.

Want P133

AIR WARRIOR II

Mark II of the World's First SVGA Flight Sim is here. Still mainly an online game, still got those weird graphics...

Air Warrior II is every young boys fantasy come true. Well OK, there aren't any girls in lingerie, but rather the chance to be a brash young fighter pilot pitting his skills against the enemy in a duel to the death. The original Air Warrior came as an on-line only game, designed to be used in conjunction with Compuserve's Air Warrior site to bring would be heroes together from all over the world. The second incarnation retains much of the feel of that version but also comes with a host of stand alone missions and gives the gamer a lot more control over how everything works and looks too.

Who needs texture-maps anyway?

There is no texture mapping to speak of, nor any fancy effects either. It's not easy to say whether Kesmai did this so that the game wouldn't be slowed down when played over the net or not, but even when played as a

stand alone game the frame rate is pretty abysmal. On a P166 MMX I was only getting about 12-14 fps.

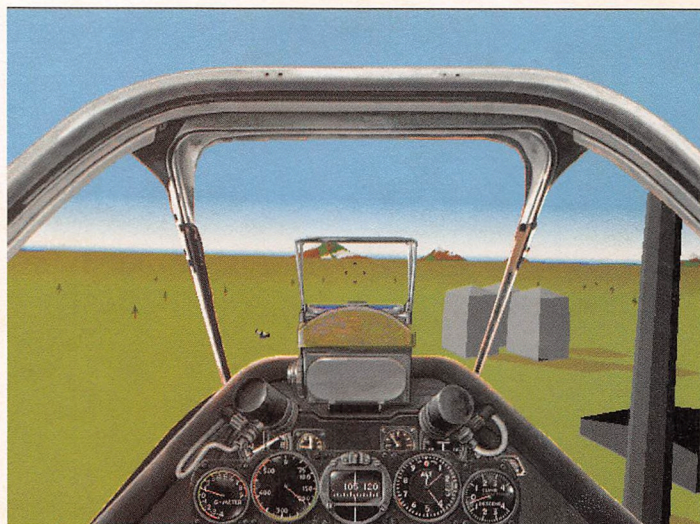
If you have a very fast PC and access to the net however, Air Warrior II has much to offer the virtual pilot in terms of features and gameplay. The focus is on realism and providing the player with as authentic an experience as possible, fighting against other human pilots instead of the usual computer AI. Over 35 aircraft have been modelled with performance characteristics as close to original as possible. Four theatres of war have been represented: WWI, WWII Europe, WWII Pacific and Korea. With a good selection of aircraft from each to choose from. Players of the original Air Warrior may mourn the loss of the Russian Yak from the game, but it's not likely... The depiction of the cockpit instrumentation is kept the same for each aircraft, so that you can get familiar with the layout and learn to read all the gadgets quickly, you'll need to if you're going to survive for any length of time.

And now, stand-alone missions!

If you don't want to spend the cash, or if you just want to hone your skills in the cockpit before or between on-line missions Air Warrior II has a pretty extensive range of stand alone missions to choose from. These

missions are mostly based on actual historical encounters from all the theatres of war represented in the game. They don't have any snazzy bits like medals and promotions however, can't have everything now can we.

The AI for the computer controlled aircraft is very good, they're certainly not pushovers, and as the game has no difficulty settings novice pilots



Thankfully a proper full-screen mode is available...

can transport you to a world of Aces and handlebar moustaches in fine style, giving you lots of fun in the process. As a stand alone game however it leaves a bit to be desired in both graphical excellence and depth.

George Soropos



Realism be damned! Dogfighting is a science....

+ Plus

<http://www.imagicgames.com/aw2.dir/aw2.html>

AIR WARRIOR II

From Interactive Magic and Kesmai

The pleasures of battle games, from the tactics and strategy of the game play, to the graphics and sound, Air Warrior II is a must-have for the serious player. It's a game that's both fun and challenging, and it's a game that's been around for a long time. It's a game that's been around for a long time. It's a game that's been around for a long time.

Air Warrior II is a stand-alone game that's been around for a long time. It's a game that's been around for a long time. It's a game that's been around for a long time. It's a game that's been around for a long time. It's a game that's been around for a long time.



This could be you, that could be anyone in the world.

73%	
Category	Combat Flight Sim
Players	1-Multi
Publisher	Interactive Magic
Price	\$????
Rating	??
Available	Now
For	Based on the only and original on-line air combat world, join a squadron or make your own and go out on patrol!
Against	Needs a ninja PC and a patch download to run smoothly, even though the graphics are quite primitive. You'll also need to fork out to Compuserve, Prodigy or America On-Line to keep playing once your free 20 hours are up.
Need	Pentium, Win95, 12Mb RAM, 1M SVGA
Want	P166, 16Mb RAM, 28k Modem

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Cave Wars

CATEGORY Strategy

PLAYERS 1-5 (hotseat)

PUBLISHER Avalon Hill

PRICE \$TBA

RATING M15+

AVAILABLE Now

NEED 486/DX/33, 8Mb
Ram, MS-DOS 5.0

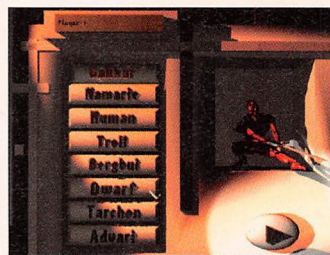
WANT 486/DX/66

overall

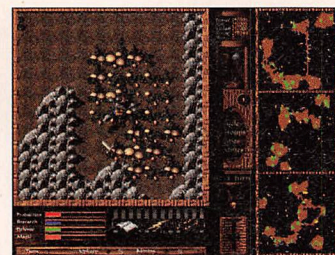
72%

A fine single player game with plenty of depth and lastability, let down a little by a lack of attention to multiplayer options.

They tried, but the 8 different races couldn't exist together underground without killing each other. If it wasn't the Dwarves enslaving the Tarchons it was the Advari using the humans as living hosts for their young. Matters have come to a head, and now it's all out war as every race battles to control the underground and reach the surface to reclaim it from the powerful and twisted race that pushed all the others underground in the first place. And so begins Cave Wars, the latest in a long line of fantasy role playing strategy titles



Added dimensions. Cave Wars has you fighting 3 levels simultaneously.

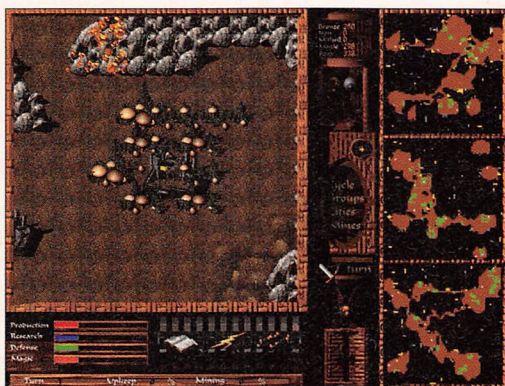


from Avalon Hill. It's another 'build up an empire and bash the crap out of everyone else' kind of game, with resource management, research, magic and real time

combat in the ilk of MOO2. The action in each scenario takes place in three levels of underground caves (hence the title), with access between each different level through holes scattered around the place. Avalon Hill have paid

good attention to the detail of the gameplay, with 8 different races to choose from, and a host of micro management decisions necessary during each turn. Cave Wars is a well produced and presented game that offers a pleasant amount of depth and strategy without going overboard. The major quibble I have with the game however, is that multiplayer is only possible through the same computer - there's no modem, no network, and no internet play. Need I say that this aspect sucks immensely in an otherwise fine game?

Gareth Jones



Settlers 2 Mission Disk

CATEGORY Real time resource management add-on

PLAYERS 1-2 (same computer)

PUBLISHER Blue Byte

PRICE \$39.95

RATING G

AVAILABLE Now

NEED Settlers2, DOS 6,
486/DX2/66, 2x
CD-Rom, 8MB RAM

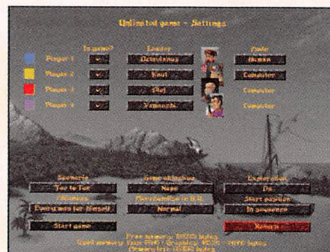
WANT P90

overall

67%

One for the Settlers 2 addicts. New, harder, missions but not a lot else.

They're back! The little non-blue smurfy type creatures that emerged on my desktop a few months back and stole sleep from me on too many occasions have returned with new scenarios and new maps, and new ways to keep me in my computer seat, toilet breaks notwithstanding. The mission disk isn't a stand alone program, you'll still need the original S2 disk, and the new missions are for masters of S2 - the scenarios start difficulty-wise where the previous version left off (which was pretty bloody hard). Rather than continue where S2 left off scenario-wise though, Blue Byte have gone for a different angle. This



The mission pack carries on right where the original finished.



time the goal is to conquer the whole World starting from Rome and moving through Europe and onwards from there, which will be an enticing prospect for the megalomaniacs (like me) out there. 'Come on you little non-blue smurfie type people, together we'll rule the world! <cue maniacal laughter>'. OK, so that's the new scenarios; they're hard and your mission is to take over the world. What else do you get for your money? Well, unfortunately not a lot. Free games have now been retitled as unlimited

ed games, and there are about 10 new maps for this section, but that's about it. I suppose this is why it's called a mission disk and not an expansion disk. There's no new units, no new buildings, and the ships are still captained by someone with the intelligence of a mentally challenged billy goat. For fans of the original, though, there's plenty of fun to be had. The new scenario is guaranteed to challenge, and you can look forward to many hours spent building the perfect town (or city) design while your soldiers do that little 'jump in the air and whack the opposition over the head with their sword until they scream and disappear' move that never fails to amuse.

Gareth Jones



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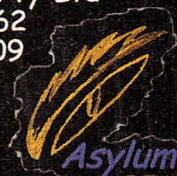
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NCAA Final Four '97

CATEGORY Basketball Sim

PLAYERS 1-4

PUBLISHER Mindscape

PRICE \$TBA

RATING G

AVAILABLE Now

NEED P75, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-Rom, Win '95.

WANT P133, 16MB, 4X CD-Rom.

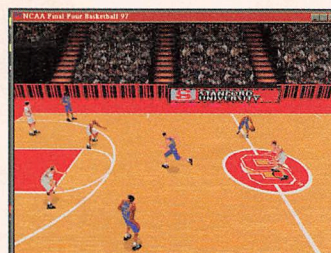
overall

74%

Fun and easy to play. A well set out game that doesn't try to out glitz and glamour the NBA-styled titles.



Well, ok, so you've played all the NBA titles recently. You've conquered the playoffs, and proudly wear your gold ring around the place and now you're thirsting for something more. Well, this might grab your interest. Instead of all the megarich megastars of the NBA, you're in control of the soon to be megarich megastars of College basketball, the NCAA. It's authentic too, all 64 teams are represented, and apparently they all play with the same characteristics as their real life counterparts. All the players stats can be edited though, and the game is itself quite configurable as well, camera views, slo-mo replays, detail levels and so on. The game itself looks great, animations are smooth and there

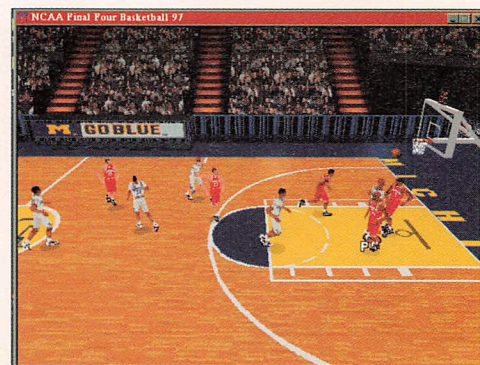


is also a good variety of different moves that the players perform. There's two sets of moves, one for offense (why can't they just call it attack? grrr..) and one for deeeense. Both are simple, with jump, pass, shoot, steal and turbo all that was felt necessary. There's no button 1 + button 2 three times quickly to do a spinning somersault slam dunk or anything like that. If your player is close to the basket then he'll dunk it if he can. Simple, nice. I liked it. What I didn't like... oh alright, what I hated with a passion, was that FMV played the whole time that the

options screens were up - and that's any time a game isn't being played. The mouse jerks around terribly, and choosing options is at times almost impossible - It's almost guaranteed to drive you insane. Apart from that though, it's quite a decent game and is plenty of fun to play.

Gareth Jones

Basketball games are all very similar. Only bad ones stand out.



Norse by Norsewest

The return of the lost Vikings

CATEGORY Platformer

PLAYERS 1

PUBLISHER Interplay

PRICE \$TBA

RATING G

AVAILABLE Now

NEED 486DX66, 8Mb RAM, 2 x CD, Win 95/DOS

WANT Nothing special

overall

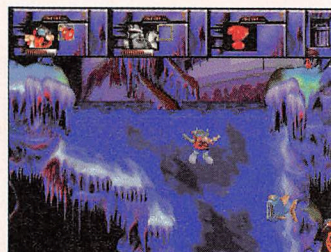
72%

A simple idea for a platformer done well. All three (and their friends) have to use their abilities to work together to get the job done.



Oh, how Balrog, Olaf and I, Erik, longed for those lazy days sailing our longboat, especially when we were aboard the alien spaceship commanded by the evil Tomator. But eventually we triumphed. And so we returned to our Viking village where we settled back to eat, fish and tell the story of our adventure, which came to be known as The Adventure Of The Lost Vikings, and there was much talk of a software company making a computer game about us (though nobody was really sure what the hell that meant, us being Vikings from the dark ages and all).

Our happy days are over now though, because the evil Tomator is back and he wants revenge. We've been thrown on another journey through time and space in an effort



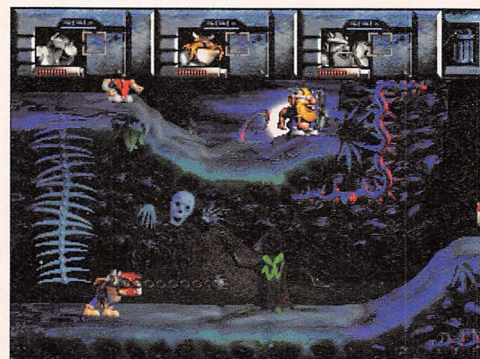
to beat the snot out of Tomator and get back home. Just like before, the three of us have to work together, each of us using our special abilities when it suits. Balrog, being a big and strong meathead type carries a lightsabre (ever since he saw remastered StarWars at the Valhalla...) and a bionic arm. Olaf helps out by using his shield to block enemies and to float downwards when he falls, and then there's his other unique talent - farting. A powerful fart from Olaf can break through walls, or give him a nice little boost while he's falling. I'm the speedy guy. Erik the Really Fast they call me, and I

have little rocket boots to give me a boost to break ceilings and stuff, and I can jump really high too. Oh, and did I mention that I am the only one that can swim?

Anyway, it's a return to the types of games that Beam do so well; the halcyon days of C64 games. Serviceable graphics, and fairly simple gameplay that's annoyingly addictive and really quite good, even if it did begin to pall after a while. Good stuff, if you like that kind of thing.

Gareth Jones

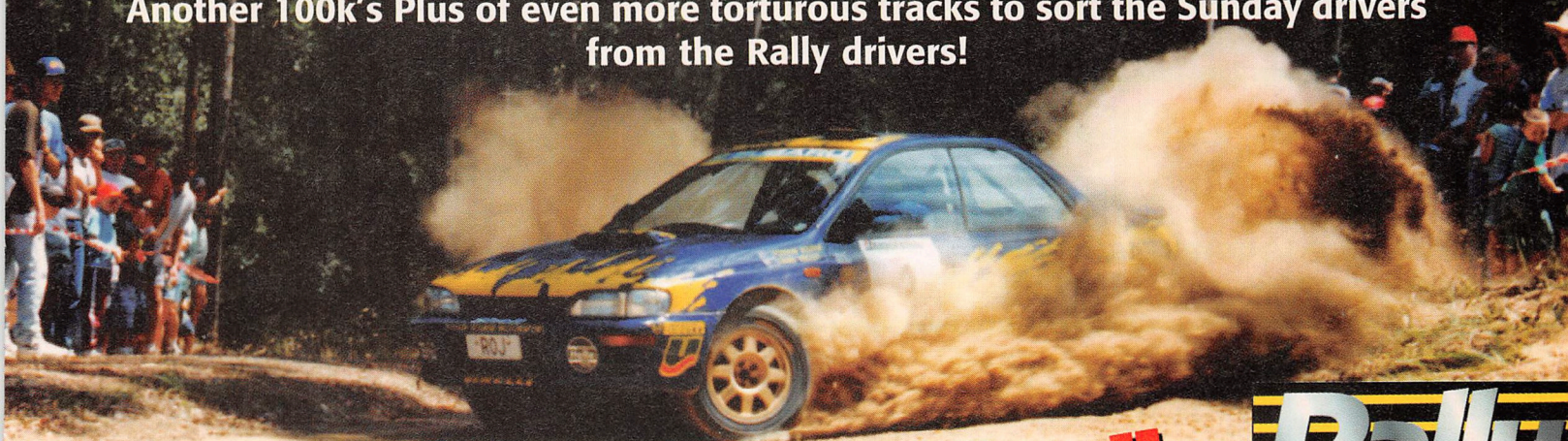
A classy platform game for grown-ups too!



RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP DRIVERS CAN NOW GO...

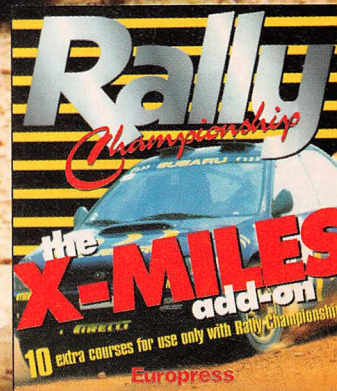
THE X-TRA MILE

Another 100k's Plus of even more torturous tracks to sort the Sunday drivers from the Rally drivers!

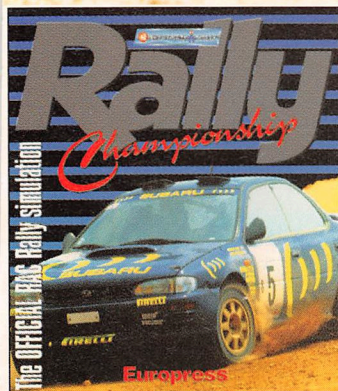


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- 10 NEW TRACKS, OVER 100 K'S OF TORTURE!
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Make no mistake, there is NO comparison!



When it comes to judging what makes a good rally sim, there really is only one person qualified - A Rally Driver! Here's what they have said about Rally Championship.
"Equals or even beats arcade games in realism and graphics. I was able to setup my computer car, & have it handle just like the real thing! There simply is no better!" - Peter Anderson - Rally Driver: 2nd outright driver NSW Championship 1988. NSW PR2A Class Champion 88,89,90. NSW N2 Class Champion 94,95,96. NSW A2 Champion 96. Australian N2 Class Champion 95.
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A QUICK FEATURE / REQUIREMENT COMPARISON

FEATURE	Rally Champ	Rally Challenge	Sega Rally
Number of Cars to drive	6	3	2 + 1 Hidden
Number of Tracks	28 + 10 addons	9	3 + 1 Hidden
Ability to Customise Cars	YES	YES	NO
"Dirty Cars"	YES	YES	NO
Min PC Required	486 DX 2/66	486 DX 4/100	Pentium 75
Minimum RAM Required	8 Meg	8 Meg	16 Meg
Runs Under	DOS or Win95	Win 95 only	Win 95 only
Minimum Hard Disk Space	2 Meg	56 Meg	40 Meg
CD-Rom Drive Speed	Double Speed	Double Speed	Quad Speed
Recommended Retail Price	\$69.95	\$79.95	\$89.95
Tech Support	FREE	\$1.00 per Min	\$1.50 per Min

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Over The Reich

CATEGORY Strategy

PLAYERS 1-2 (Internet Play)

PUBLISHER Avalon Hill

PRICE \$99.95

RATING G8

AVAILABLE Now

NEED 486DX/33, 8MB RAM
Win3.11 or Win95

WANT Nothing special.

overall

70%

For lovers of the technical side of WW2 Aircraft and aerial combat.

Whether it be Infantry Engagements of the Civil War, or the highly mechanized warfare of the modern era, turn based combat usually represents battle on good old Terra Firma. Over The Reich adds some altitude to the turn based formula and concentrates on the European Air War of 1943-45. This period was a bit of a turning point as "Big Boy" Goering and his Luftwaffe were having fierce battles with the Allied air forces, whilst on the ground the Allies were readying the Normandy invasion. Many of the Nazi High Command must have considered that much needed "holiday" to South America at this point.

Whether you choose to side with the Allies or the Germans, Over The Reich places you in the role of Squadron Leader. Most engagements will have you controlling a small number of aircraft (2-8 usually) in various missions ranging from bombing runs to the classic "watch ya six, old boy" dogfight. The playing area is represented in the usual 2D battlefield view similar to other turn based strategy fare. The aim is to utilise each turn by

positioning your aircraft where it can get a clear shot at the enemy. The initial difficulty level keeps everything simple, with a constant altitude level of 18,000 Ft and no complex avionics to deal with. Pumping up the difficulty results in the added realism of monitoring G-Forces on pilots, blind spots and the complexity of different flight altitudes. A flat board game perspective works well with tank games, but keeping track of individual planes and their varying altitudes on a 2D "board" is tough. There are altitude and cockpit gauges!, but the feeling of controlling aircraft is somewhat lost in the world of the board game format.

The Campaign mode offers the chance to choose specific pilots (based on skill and experience) for war related missions. Success in these missions relies upon reading the excellent database that covers all of the aircraft specs, there is even some "Olden Days" B&W footage of each plane in



A unique strategy concept - turn-based dogfighting!

action. Over The Reich offers a change from artillery and Pincer movements for the WW2 avionics fan, but land based combat junkies will quickly miss their Sherman Tanks and the like. *Peter Sharpe*

Noir

CATEGORY Adventure

PLAYERS 1

PUBLISHER Cyberdreams

PRICE \$TBA

RATING TBA

AVAILABLE Now

NEED 486DX/66, 8Mb RAM,
Win3.1 or higher

WANT Pentium, 16Mb RAM,
Win95

overall

61%

Deeply flawed, yet still enjoyable detective adventure.

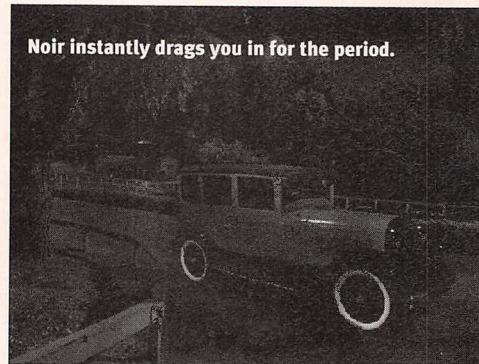
Here's a curiosity for you. Noir is a game played entirely in black and white. Yep, there's no colour at all, just thousands of shades of grey. It makes sense though, when you consider that Noir is a detective adventure set in 1940s Los Angeles and based upon all those early crime thrillers that Hollywood was producing at the time. And not only that, it works too, looks great, oozes atmosphere, and is hugely evocative of the period.

The game begins after the disappearance of private investigator Jack Slayton. You take over the six cases he was working on and, if you can find the time, hopefully uncover

what happened to Jack. Beautiful still shots illustrate your progress as you wander the streets of L.A. from Chinatown to the docklands. These are intercut by FMV sequences when you chance upon another person. Unfortunately, these tend to appear "out of nowhere",

since you can't see the people in the still shots. They feel detached from the rest of the game, even though they are central to the plot. You can't talk either, instead you just stand there and watch and listen - a limitation of nearly every game that is structured in this way. I would have thought it almost essential to a game in this detective genre, that the main character provides some sort of narration (telling us his thoughts as he goes or

Noir instantly drags you in for the period.



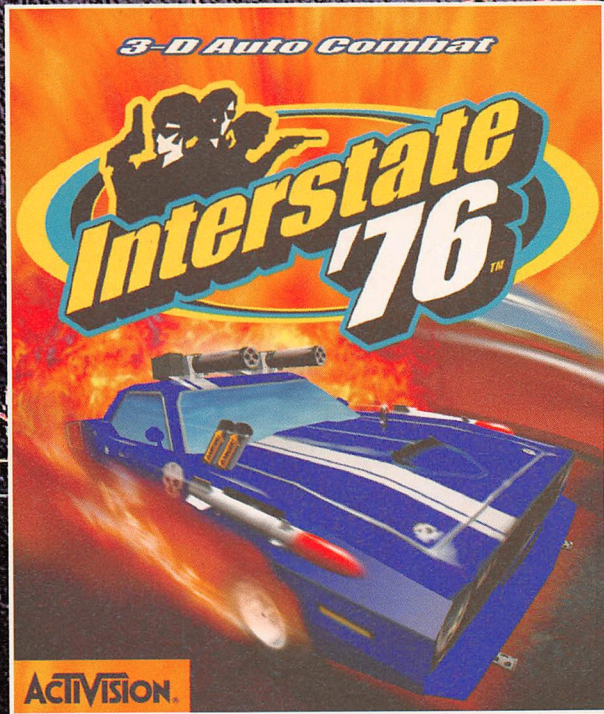
even a voice-over at various points). But in Noir he keeps his mouth firmly shut.

And, before I conclude and say that Noir isn't all that bad, I ought to mention how disorientating those still shots are. I spent half my time wondering which direction I had come from and generally going round and round in circles. But, yes, Noir isn't all that bad. Each of the mysteries is reasonably well constructed and you can tackle them in any order. The atmosphere is what maintains your interest, despite the problems I mentioned earlier. It's still not as good as The Dame Was Loaded, however.

David Wildgoose

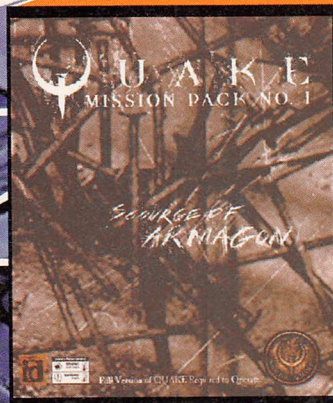


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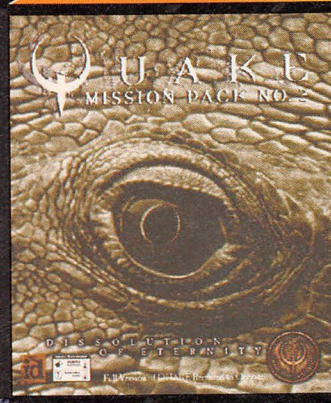


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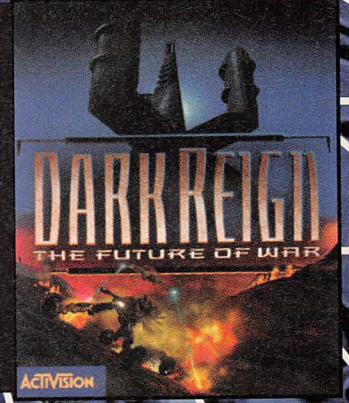
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Third Reich

CATEGORY Strategy

PLAYERS 1-2 (e-mail multi-play with patch)

PUBLISHER Avalon Hill

PRICE \$99.95

RATING G

AVAILABLE Now

NEED 486/66, 8Mb RAM, MS-DOS or WIN95,

WANT 486/100, 16Mb RAM

overall

82%

Large scale WW2 strategy captured on a CD-ROM, difficult but rewarding.

Turn-based strategy for the traditionalists.

Third Reich maintains a very conservative "board game" image, with no emphasis on eye candy. While it won't ever hang in an art gallery, Third Reich offers deeply engaging WW2 strategy. Events start with your selection of either Germany or the Allies. You can choose to play shorter specific campaigns or the ambitious 1939-1945 big boy campaign. Land based units (tanks and infantry), naval and air units are all represented in the game by boring but functional numerical counters. After placing your units around your starting territory the glories of war can begin.

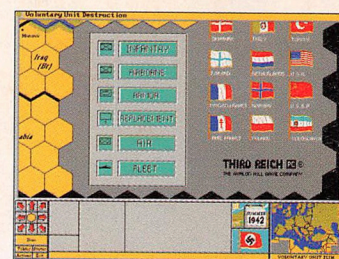
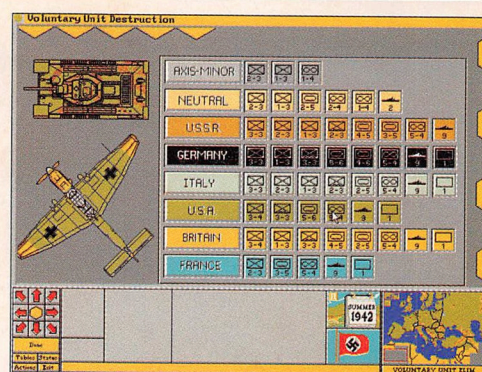
Instigating a War soon becomes much more than pushing tanks across Europe. Supply lines must be maintained, balancing resources between the different fronts and many more

responsibilities. One of the most important tasks is to keep war production up. This is handled by the universal BRP (Basic Resource Point), which you gain by conquering countries and generally being an economically driven General. All these activities while making for an overwhelming level of complexity at first, give Third Reich real depth and challenge as a War Sim. My German campaign involved getting bogged down on the Russian Front (damn Russkie weather), take most of France... only to see the Americans invade Italy and then it was all down hill. I had planned differently, but history had repeated itself in a sim, a sure sign of quality in a game.

The only downsides are the overly complicated manuals (two manu-

als!) and thus steep learning curve. The game had some very major bugs which kept leading to crashes, grab the latest patch (1.37 at time of writing) off www.avalonhill.com and everything settles down nicely though.

Peter Sharpe



Star Wars - Yoda Stories

CATEGORY Adventure/Puzzle

PLAYERS 1

PUBLISHER LucasArts

PRICE \$39.95

RATING G

AVAILABLE Now

NEED 486/66, 8MB RAM, 2 x CD, Win '95

WANT P90, 16MB RAM. (4 x CD, 2mb Video Card for SW SE movies)

overall

74%

Cute, fun, with plenty of lastability, and with the added bonus of a behind the scenes look at the Star Wars S.E.



At first, it seems to be a simple game, designed more for a slack half hour or so at the office or wherever, but Yoda Stories drags you in and gives you that "I'll just finish this bit then I'll get back to work" feeling, over and over again. Like its predecessor,



For folks who just can't get enough Star Wars.

Indy's desktop adventure, Yoda stories is a cute little top down adventure/puzzle game that randomly generates a new world each time you restart it, so there's always going to be something new to do. Basically, you take on the role of Luke Skywalker as a young Jedi Knight and guide him through the challenges that Yoda gives to him. The scenarios are easy and fun to play, with the tasks remaining basically the same - find items and use them to solve puzzles, the reward being a new item, which is necessary to solve another puzzle, and so on. They aren't all that easy though, so don't expect to turn the brain off and coast around, or you'll be in for a very frustrating time.

Something that's going to keep the brain turned on is the bonus behind the scenes look at the re-released Star Wars Trilogy Special Edition, included on the CD. It runs as a separate program, and includes full screen clips of the old scenes and the remastered parts. There's also interviews with the big kahuna himself, George Lucas, as well as some of the team from Industrial Light and Magic, storyboards, both new and old models of the characters, and lots of other cool bits too. With the two together, Yoda Stories and the Star Wars S.E. Stuff, and at a reasonable \$39.95 it's well worth a look, especially for the Star Wars fans.

Gareth Jones



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Golf Pro 2000

CATEGORY Sports Sim

PLAYERS 1-4

PUBLISHER Roadshow

PRICE \$TBA

RATING G8+

AVAILABLE Now

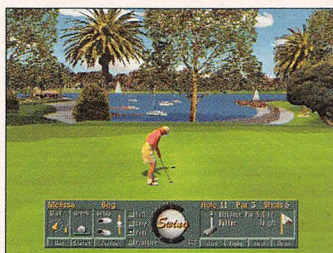
NEED 386, 8Mb RAM, 2 x CD

WANT P90, 8Mb RAM, 4 x Cd

overall

65 %

Another pretty and well made golf game, this one Australian.



Golf games are mostly green.

There's only so much you can do with a Golf game. You've got your realistically animated golfers, your photorealistic scenery, your commentators offering helpful advice, your variety of game plays - skins, stroke and match play. What else can you do? Well, Ron Brill of the aptly named Brilliant Interactive has decided to have a stab at another golf sim and well, it's got all of the above, plus a few more bits and pieces added on. The best one, in our opinion, is the ability to customise the commentators comments. Through an in-game menu, any wave file can be used for a specific shot. Keep landing in the water all the time? Use a motivational sound snippet!



("You're a f*cking idiot! Get it right"). Then there's the odd kangaroo that bounces across the fairway while you tee up (you can't hit it - we tried), or the ability to rotate the viewing area, or to change the angle that you hit the ball. Apparently the course, or at least one of them, is modelled on Royal Melbourne, and the game itself has been developed in Melbourne. If you're a golf addict, then it could just be the

thing instead of those wasted Saturday afternoons spent watching Greg Norman choke yet again.

Gareth Jones

SlamTilt

CATEGORY Pinball Tilt

PLAYERS 1-6 (same machine)

PUBLISHER Metro Games

PRICE \$TBA

RATING G

AVAILABLE Now

NEED P75, 8MB RAM, Win '95, 2 X CD.

WANT P90, 16MB RAM

overall

68 %

Another pinball sim, and another good one. But still not quite as good as the real thing.

Ah, the good old days of playing the pinnies at the local bowling alley. A few 20c pieces all that was necessary for hours of shaking, slapping and swearing fun. Nowadays the machines are much trendier, with animated displays, whizz-bang music and bonuses so complex it almost requires a masters degree in Pinball Scoring Techniques (M. Psc). There's been quite a few other PC pinball titles since those days but none have quite captured the essence of pinball, no matter how hard you hit the shift keys or shake the monitor. One of the largest problems with PC pinball titles has been the screen - either it only shows half the pinnie table, or isn't detailed enough if it shows the whole thing. Slam Tilt takes the first option, and opts for a partial close up of half the table. It comes with four different tables, each with it's own tricks and bonus stuff. Overall it's quite good, the ball dynamics are well done and realistic, and the tables are well laid out too. Unfortunately, it's bloody hard to aim at ramps or chutes you can't



see, which tends to detract from the experience a little. As far as half-screen pinnie sims go, this isn't a bad one though.

Gareth Jones

The quest for the perfect pinball game continues.



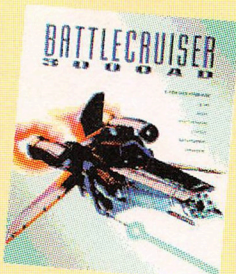
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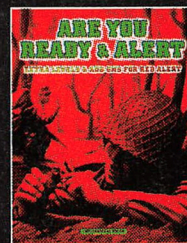
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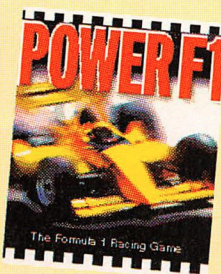
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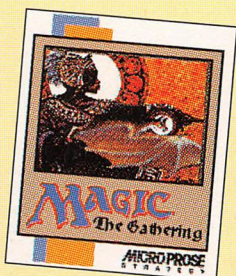
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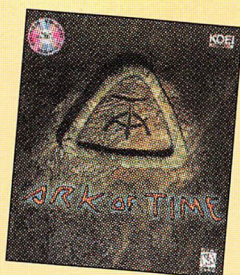
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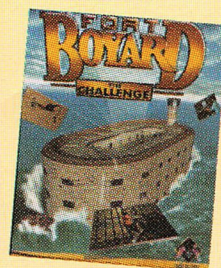
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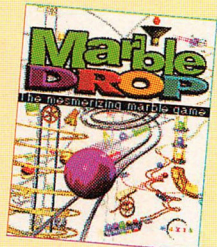
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Ultimate Soccer Manager 2

CATEGORY Strategy

PLAYERS 1-8

PUBLISHER Sierra

PRICE \$79.95

RATING G

AVAILABLE Now

NEED 486DX/33, 8Mb RAM, 2xCD

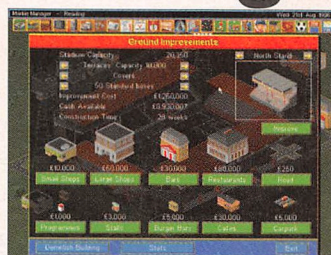
WANT Pentium, 16Mb RAM

overall
72%

A deep, absorbing strategy game - but just a little dry.



Ultimate Soccer Managing even extends to building new ground facilities.



See it as Red Alert with foot- balls. You are at the helm of an army from the English, French, or German leagues. Each campaign has three (possibly four) distinct missions running concurrently - a Championship and at least two Cup competitions. While each match can be seen as a minor, but crucial sortie along the way.

The troops in your squad at the beginning are pretty basic units. Later though, you can upgrade in the transfer market. Perhaps signing a stout centre-back to give some defensive stability; a skilful, gifted midfielder general to provide an offensive thrust; or a speedy, nimble winger useful for outflanking the enemy. There are plenty of tactical

considerations, too. Should you go for broke, committing yourself to all-out attack and hoping for an early critical strike, or should you adopt a defensive approach, settling in for a war of attrition, determined not to take too many casualties too soon. You can fine-tune your battle plans constantly, tweaking troop movement, concentrating upon your enemies weak points - that fullback seems a bit lethargic, so get your defence to play long balls in behind him for your new speedy, nimble winger to chase.

Various aspects of typical resource management are also catered for. You need to set ticket prices, build shops, stalls, cafes, construct new stands at your stadium, take loans

from and open accounts with the bank, hire training staff and assign scouts (the latter two are essentially your R&D department), and treat injuries to get those men ready for battle again.

You watch the combat unfold in real-time from your lofty position high in the grandstand. Here you can even suggest further strategic ploys, telling your troops to push forward, stay back, use the full width of the pitch, mark a certain opponent, or make a substitution, as they scurry around the green expanse below.

USM2 is an accomplished football management game. Its presentation is a bit confusing at times (the icon controls and teletext-style results service are particularly awful), but it does offer unparalleled depth within the genre. Yet it's not quite as accessible and fun as Championship Manager 2.

David Wildgoose

Warcraft II - The next 70 levels

CATEGORY Real-time strategy

PLAYERS 1-8

PUBLISHER Blizzard

PRICE \$TBA

RATING M

AVAILABLE Now

NEED Warcraft II, 486/33, 8Mb RAM, 2 x CD

WANT 486/66

overall
63%

Another pinball sim, and another good one. But still not quite as good as the real thing.

Warcraft 2, for its time, was a fantastic game. Today, there's still plenty of people who load it occasionally up and re-hash the war between the Orcs and the Humans. For most though, the single player war is over and the computer opponent is a beaten and pathetic lump laying in the corner long forgotten, and the multiplayer maps have been played to death as well. There's always the .pud files available online, but as with most home-made level designs for every decent one you'd have to wade through 17 others that look like they were made by a mentally challenged ocelot who'd been trained to hit keys at random. Blizzard, being the kind of people that they are, have authorised another WC add-on release around two years after the initial release of the game. They weren't designed by the people from Blizzard though, instead the new levels come courtesy of Maverick Software - and no I'd never heard of them before this either. Anyway, there's not a lot more that can be said; there's 70 new levels, both for single play and

multiplayer, they maps and scenarios are diverse and on the whole well made, and if you aren't completely sick of the whole Warcraft thing yet, then you probably will be if you buy this and then play them all.

Gareth Jones

For those that haven't absolutely and completely had enough of Warcraft 2.



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SPATIAL SYSTEMS

Game controllers - THE BIG TEST.

Ben Mansill

Today's gamer has an arsenal of joysticks. One for each job, depending on their style and gaming preference. Usually a knockabout cheapie for dirty work, together with a big and sexy multi-buttoned job for getting around in simulations. Budget depending, they may also sport a steering wheel and pedal set, and for flight sim pilots a full HOTAS system with rudder pedals. Yes, it's a good time to be a PC gamer. The choice for controllers has never been greater and budget versions of previously NASA spec controllers are finally appearing. We decided it was time to do The Big Test. Assembling and testing was a mammoth undertaking. At the end of this project we were left with two clear conclusions: Firstly, that price has a surprisingly irrelevant bearing on quality, and secondly, that joystick packaging completely sucks. You try re-packaging 60 joysticks with their weird little cardboard shapes that fit around the stick to ensure safe shipping. Joysticks were designed to be taken out of their boxes ONCE and never repackaged. Oh how we suffered for you...

Hand-on testing

Each controller was tested and assessed for several factors, chiefly was ergonomics, being the overall design, how good it felt to hold, how sensibly the buttons were positioned and how smoothly the stick moved.

Other considerations were quality and everyday usability. Whether a controller was programmable (and how easy this was to do) was a factor. We're talking native programming here - just about any stick can be programmed via a throttle or third-party TSR, what we looked at though was programming via built-in hardware or purpose-written software.

Lastly, we rated each controller with an overall score out of 10 and gave a for/against and a summary. Hopefully this will give you a better idea of what to look for in a new controller. It should also help you discover what you actually need and don't need. The controllers have been divided into several categories. This was done mainly because we enjoy dividing things into categories, but also to make it all make a little sense.

Glossary:

Potentiometer (or pot). A dial that senses degrees of movement. Every analogue joystick on the planet has at least 2 - one each for the X and Y axis, plus a third if it has a built-in throttle. The volume knob on your stereo also uses a pot, as do many other consumer electronic devices. The difference between a good pot and a cheap one is that good ones last a hell of a lot longer and provide much more accurate and responsive control. Put simply, the bigger it is, the better.

Digital. Joystick buttons send a digital on/off signal. This doesn't offer the proportional movement of an analogue pot, but a new generation of digital pots is appearing. These will eventually take over from analogue pots as they should last much longer, eliminate "drift" and also eliminate the 15% tax an analogue controller makes on your CPU.

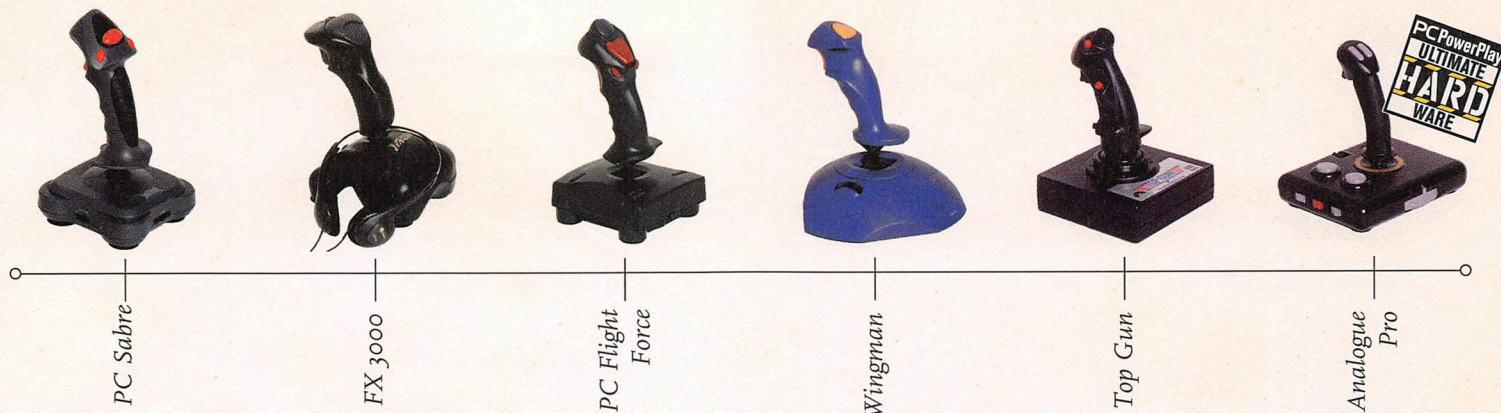
Drift. Over time an analogue joystick will lose its center position. This is manifested in flight sims by an inability to fly straight and level with hands off. Most sticks use a trim dial for each axis to correct drift.

D-pad (or Direction pad). A 4 or 8 way digital thumb pad used on control pads.

Hat (or Coolie Hat). A 4-way knob used in flight sims for viewpoints. On sticks with multiple hats they extra positions are used for radar modes, weapon select - or just about anything you want via programming.

Castle switch. Virtually the same as the Hat, but usually not dedicated to view controls.

Programming. The ability to change the functions of the controller buttons according to the game you are playing, based on your preferences.



Cheap 'n' basic

PC Sabre

InterAct
\$34.95

Type: 4-button

Programmable: No

Ergonomics: An extremely impressive stick for the asking price. Long, smooth throw, good buttons in the right places - duplicated on the other side for lefties. A big rubber bit set in the grip and handrests make it a great feeling stick to hold. Suction grips on the base and a lack of silly value adding crap make it a top all-round stick.

Special features:

Duplicated buttons on the left side for non-righthanders.

For: Everything you want in a cheap stick.

Against: Too lightly sprung for proper flying.

Summary: The complete budget stick.

8 / 10

FX 3000

Suncom
\$49.95

Type:

Programmable: No

Ergonomics: What the... When Suncom's chief threw this idea to the labcoats they cried as one "it can't be done!", now that the end result is here all we can say is "why was this done?" Breaking down barriers instead of creating a useful product, Suncom's designers included a set of headphones which plug into the stick, then the plug that leads off the stick goes into your soundcard's audio out jack - why you wouldn't just plug it straight in to the soundcard is utterly beyond us, as is why you'd want to use these pissy little headphones with a game anyway.

The stick doesn't center properly, has a short, notchy throw and the buttons slooowly rise up after being pushed.

Special features: Everything is special about the FX 3000. Special and different, and bad...

For: Ummm... It's black?

Against: A silly and pointless design

that should never have made it past the drunken joke stage.

Summary: Throw away the stick and keep the headphones.

0 / 10

PC Flight Force

InterAct
\$59.00

Type: 4-button

Programmable: No

Ergonomics: A great all-round stick with some clever design features as well as some careless oversights. A huge suction ring holds the stick in place solidly, movement feels good with a nice long throw, but was a bit springy for our liking. Independent auto-fire controls are useless and the button positioning was poor, as was the quality of the buttons themselves.

Special features: Huge mother of a suction cup on the base.

For: Stays put, moves well.

Against: The buttons felt like they'd last about a month.

Summary: Your regulation joystick.

5 / 10

WingMan

Logitech
\$49.00

Type: 2-button, throttle

Programmable: No

Ergonomics: One of the best sticks to wrap your hand around. The grip is ergonomic perfection with moulded lumpy bits and rests for your hand and thumb. Look elsewhere if you're a left hander though. Good, big thumb button and a chunky throttle wheel that moves smoothly. Very long throw.

Special features: None

For: Feels right in the hand. Good solid buttons.

Against: No suction cups. Big footprint.

Summary: A perfect all-purpose stick.

8 / 10

Top Gun

Thrustmaster
\$89.95

Type: 4-button + hat

Programmable: No

Ergonomics: We couldn't work out why the Top Gun seemed identical to all the other FCS-handled sticks, but managed to clock in at around half the price, so we took it apart. Ahhh ha! The potentiometers were around half the size of the high-end Thrustmaster sticks, is why. Now, we don't know exactly how much your average Made In China pot saves, but our suspicions were on high alert as a result. Then there were the two slabs on lead added to give a greater impression of quality (they'll say it helps keep it on the desk - but you'd need a lot more to keep one of these down).

So should you consider a Top Gun? Hell yes! Thrustmaster's shenanigans only cast doubt on the pricing integrity of their high-end FCS range, the Top Gun is basically your FCS Mk 2, but with slightly stiffer springs. It's still got that blessed handle, and so what if the pots only last half as long as other Thrustmaster sticks? In this category they'll probably last twice as long as other cheap sticks.

Special features: None.

For: Cheap+Thrustmaster = please consider.

Against: Why is it cheap?

Summary: "Top Gun"?

Thrustmaster discovers marketing and dispenses with the indecipherable military monikers of old.

6 / 10

Analogue Pro

Gravis
\$59.95

Type: 2-button

Programmable: No

Ergonomics: A few minutes after the Dawn of Time, Gravis made their first Analogue Pro. Today they're still making them. We think every gamer should have an Analogue Pro in their collection and here's why: Rugged Versatility. These things bounce. They float, they can survive temperatures only found inside live volcanoes and they've been used as foundations for skyscrapers.

They're also useful for certain special kinds of games. The design is not one of a classic pistol grip, rather it's an almost vertical stick poking

out of a flat base. This renders the Analogue Pro completely useless for flight sims, but ideal for driving games and arcade action. The big, flat buttons on the base are perfect for gear changes and a big swivel wheel adjusts tension so it can be as stiff or floppy as you need it. Yes.

Special features: Tension adjustment.

For: Rugged versatility.

Against: Don't fly with me.

Summary: A gamers security blanket.

9 / 10

F-15E Raptor

Suncom
\$109.00

Type:

4-button, hat and castle switch

Programmable: No

Ergonomics: Looks identical to Suncom's Talon, but uses the Talon's side switches for autofire on/off for each of the stick's 4 buttons. Hideously ugly, it claims to be modelled on the real F15E stick. Castle and hat switches move within defined notches that are easy to miss from center position. Has exceptionally nice movement with no click as movement crosses each axis.

Special features: Autofire can be enabled/disabled for each button.

We simply can't see the point.

For: Moves smoothly.

Against: Notchy hat movement, hard to move castle switch without cutting your thumb on it, pointless autofire switches.

Summary: If you can't quite stretch the budget to a Thrustmaster but want to pretend.

4 / 10

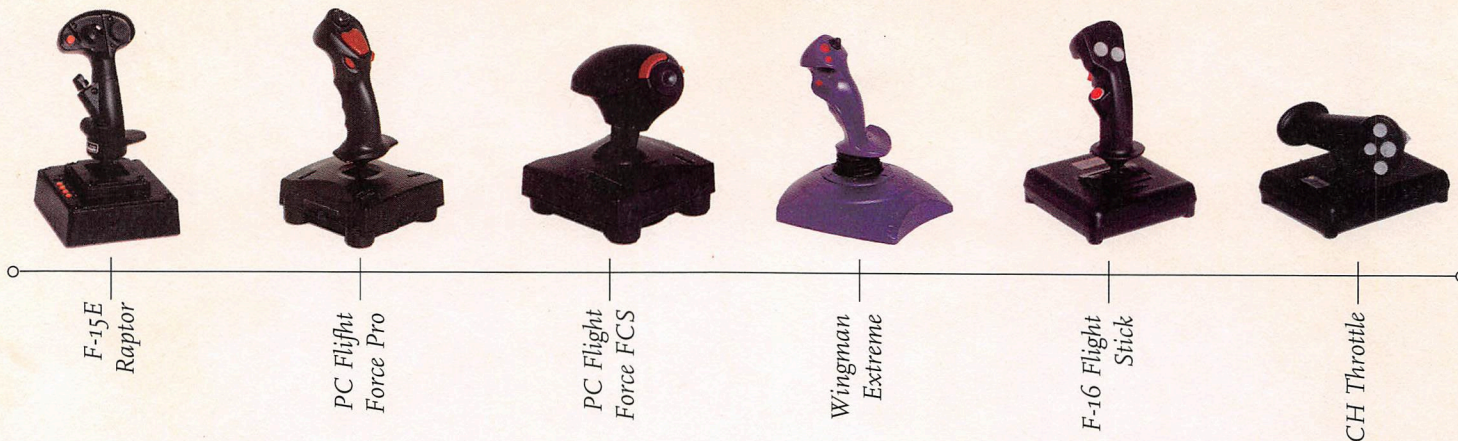
PC Flight Force Pro

InterAct
\$79.95

Type: 4-button, throttle, hat

Programmable: No

Ergonomics: Same as the standard Flight Force, but with a hat and throttle added. The throttle is hidden away on the side and is very stiff to move. Button positioning looks to have been prioritised for good looks instead of ergonomic functionality.



Special features: Huge single suction cup on base.
For: Fully featured at a bargain price.
Against: Throttle slider is way too stiff. Dodgy buttons.
Summary: A good stick sans the pointless autofire buttons and yucky throttle.

6/10

Mid range

PC Flight Force Fire Control System

InterAct \$89.95

Type: Programmable throttle
Programmable: yes
Ergonomics: Easily the best product to come out of an InterAct box and the best affordably priced throttle around. Software-free programming is a simple case of press a button then hit the keyboard key you want it to be. Programming connected joysticks (of any brand) is just as easy. Sensible design without the quirky idiosyncrasies that mar more expensive throttles. Button positioning is bad though, and they lack any tactile feedback.
Special features: Digital coolie hat.
For: Ease of programming, fully featured.
Against: Throttle tension knob does absolutely nothing. Buttons stick and are poorly located.
Summary: Incredible value, despite several minor shortcomings.

8/10

WingMan Extreme

Logitech \$99

Type: 4-button, hat
Programmable: No
Ergonomics: Blessed with Logitech's classic handgrip, but cursed with possibly the crappiest buttons of any of the sticks tested here. They're tiny recessed rubber jobs that offer no feedback or indication they've actually been pushed. It also has a huge and completely unnecessary rubber sheath around the base of the stick

which detached itself on our test unit. The hat barely moves and would click one way and clunk the other.
Special features: None.
For: Comfy handgrip.
Against: Awful buttons, pointless sheath at base.
Summary: A major disappointment.

2/10

CH F-16 Flightstick

CH Products \$129.95

Type: 3-button, throttle wheel
Programmable: No
Ergonomics: A bit pricey for a mid-range stick without a hat, but it's CH quality you're paying for - the stick feels like it would last forever. Unfortunately CH stuck with the same oversized handle they use with their hat-equipped high-end range, so the annoying huge head of plastic remains, but is now sparsely empty and just looks wrong. Also like the other CH sticks, the throttle wheel is positioned under the hand rest so your throttle finger cops a mashing every left turn.
Special features: None.
For: Sturdy high quality.
Against: Needs smaller handle and sensibly placed throttle.
Summary: An excellent budget stick - better still if it was budget priced.

7/10

CH Throttle

CH Products \$199.95

Type: 6-buttons, 1 x 4-way hat, 1 x 2-way switch
Programmable: Yes
Ergonomics: A huge thing that performs adequately in its main role, but shines as a programming tool for attached joysticks. Symmetry rather than ergonomics seem to have been the design priority for button placement. It slides in a slot as opposed to arcing as used by the Thrustmaster WCS Mk II. This doesn't feel very authentic and over time it could clog and become notchy. It can program any stick - not just those from the CH stable.

Special features: None.
For: Simple design, feels very comfortable over extended periods. Easy programming.
Against: Some may not like slider design.
Summary: You need a throttle even if you don't realise it now and this does the job adequately.

7/10

FCS Mk 2

Thrustmaster \$159.95

Type: 4-button + hat
Programmable: No
Ergonomics: The original and absolutely the best for everyday gaming. The FCS was originally modelled on the F-4 Phantom stick and is a lesson to all lesser sticks in elegant design. It's the right size (unlike most new sticks that favour huge), the buttons are right where you want them and the hat falls right under your thumb - not a couple of inches above it. The Mk 2 introduces a rubber inlay in the grip - completely unnecessary, as well as a rubber sheath around the base which does little more than squeak annoyingly and is best removed.

Movement is admirably light for a Thrusty, which makes the FCS Mk 2 suitable to just about anything.
Special features: None.
For: The classic 4-button stick. Every home should have one.
Against: What's with all the rubber?
Summary: One of the finest things a man can hold in his right hand.

9/10

X-Fighter

Thrustmaster \$124.95

Type: 4-button + hat
Programmable: No.
Ergonomics: As we unpacked what we cynically thought was "just another FCS Thrusty with slightly different spring settings" a revelation occurred. Clearly this was much, much more. The only basic

similarity the X-Fighter shares with it's stablemates is the regulation FCS handle, but this one is much bigger and has been chunkified pleasingly. This is probably the best joystick handle out there. What Thrustmaster have done which makes the X-Fighter so joyous to use is dispense with the standard chassis which is used across the range, replacing it with a Suncom-style arrangement, but with perfectly stiff and progressive springs. Move any Thrustmaster around and as the stick passes each axis a clear click is heard and felt. Not so with the X-Fighter. This stick moves around perfectly and centers naturally. Why aren't they all like this? One of these and a Gravis Analogue Pro with an optional WCS Mk 2 would make your joystick.

Special features: None.
For: Perfect handle size and design, near-perfect movement.
Against: Test unit squeaked a bit.
Summary: Thrustmaster's least freaky and most usable joystick.

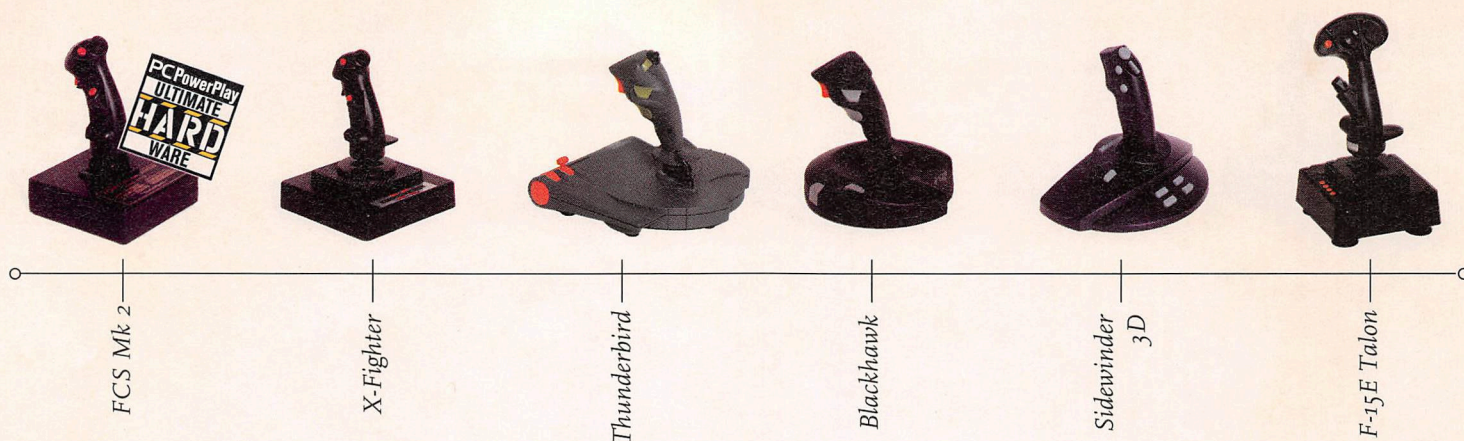
9/10

Thunderbird

Gravis \$139.95

Type: 4-button, hat, throttle
Programmable: No.
Ergonomics: Idiosyncrasies galore and about as useful as an ashtray on a motorbike. The big slab base takes up too much room, the stick moves around in a jerky, notchy manner and is set at a strange angle, pointing off to the side at about 40 degrees from the center (if the throttle facing forward is center - but why have it any other way?). The unconventional handle shape is surprisingly enjoyable to use, with the buttons positioned right under the fingers. It's not enough to save the Thunderbird though...
Special features: Tension adjustment.
For: Strange but pleasant handle.
Against: Everything else.
Summary: Just don't.

0/10



Blackhawk

Gravis
\$89.95

Type: 4-button, throttle
Programmable: No
Ergonomics: The Blackhawk looks great and feels very nice to hold, and is worth considering with 4-buttons and a throttle as standard. It does suffer the notchy movement problem which afflicts most Gravis sticks though. In the heat of battle you may not notice, but with so many other sticks out there that move around smoothly you'd have to really like the look and feel of the Blackhawk.
Special features: None.
For: Look and feel.
Against: Bit jerky.
Summary: If looks are everything.

5/10

Extreme high end

Sidewinder 3D

Microsoft
\$99.00

Type: 8-button, throttle and hat
Programmable: Yes
Ergonomics: As with Microsoft's attitude to games, this stick aims to be all things for all players. It's almost perfectly symmetrical, so won't cause problems with lefties, it's got a built-in throttle (which clunks reluctantly along its short slot) and a switch which allows Thrustmaster as well as native compatibility. Huge base needlessly eats up desk space.
Special features: Has digital sensors as well as conventional analogue potentiometers for complete compatibility. Handle is twisted for unique rudder control.
For: All-in-one design. Digital sensors, handle-twist. Easy software programming.
Against: Throttle feels very cheaply made, footprint on desk is just too big, too many compromises make this adequate for everything but good at nothing.
Summary: If yours is a one-joystick

house then this is for you.

6/10

F-15E Talon

Suncom
\$134.95

Type: 4-button, castle switch + hat
Programmable: Yes
Ergonomics: The programmable big brother of the Raptor. Like the Raptor, the Talon looks purposefully functional - read: ugly. It moves beautifully with a long throw and silky-smooth movement. Programming is unbelievably easy and is a lesson for Thrustmaster. Sound basic design is let down sadly by some very dodgy switchware for the hat and castle switch.
Special features: Software-free and super efficient programming.
For: Nice movement, easy programming.
Against: Feels cheap and breakable, castle switch has nasty sharp edges and wobbles and flops around.
Summary: Easy and pleasant to get working straight away.

5/10

WingMan Warrior

Logitech
\$149.00

Type: 4-button, hat, throttle, spin control.
Programmable: Yes
Ergonomics: Take one regulation WingMan Extreme (complete with crappy little rubber buttons), graft a lump of plastic on the side, whack a throttle control on it and a spin wheel for Quake and Doom steering and you've got yourself a "Double-fisted precision combat machine". As weird as it looks, this is one versatile controller. Use it for any regular joystick game then drive your first-person action games with it. 100% of the die-hard Quake players we know use the mouse for control, as do we, but hey, you might just prefer the Warrior instead.
Special features: Spin wheel for steering in Doom/Quake games.
For: Does regulation joystick duty as well as Dooming.

Against: Recessed rubber buttons with no feedback. A pain to configure - you may have to disconnect your mouse to get it working.
Summary: It may just give you the edge on Quake mouse players, but you've already got a mouse...

7/10

Force FX

CH Products
\$499.00

Type: 4-button, hat, castle switch with Force Feedback.
Programmable: Yes
Ergonomics: Based on the F-16 series handle, this is the worlds first Force Feedback stick. Whether the seemingly gimmicky technology will stand the test of time remains to be seen, but for now this stick delivers everything CH promise. 6 different basic effects can be combined and varied by clever programmers to produce just about any feel they desire. Native support in new games is hoped for by CH, with patches taking care of some and built-in programmability for the rest.
After several days of solid play testing we came to the unavoidable conclusion that is just doesn't really feel like you're any closer to breaking that reality barrier, instead that we were simply playing with a huge stick that had electric motors inside it that made it wobble around. Force Feedback delivers exactly what it promises, it's just that what was promised doesn't seem so cool now that we've played it.
Special features: Incorporates Force Feedback technology.
For: Uses the proven F-16 handle.
Against: Is absolutely huge, needs a power supply, is of debatable usefulness.
Summary: A bit of a burden to use as your main stick, but for novelty value this is untouchable.

6/10

F-16 Fighterstick

CH Products
\$279.95

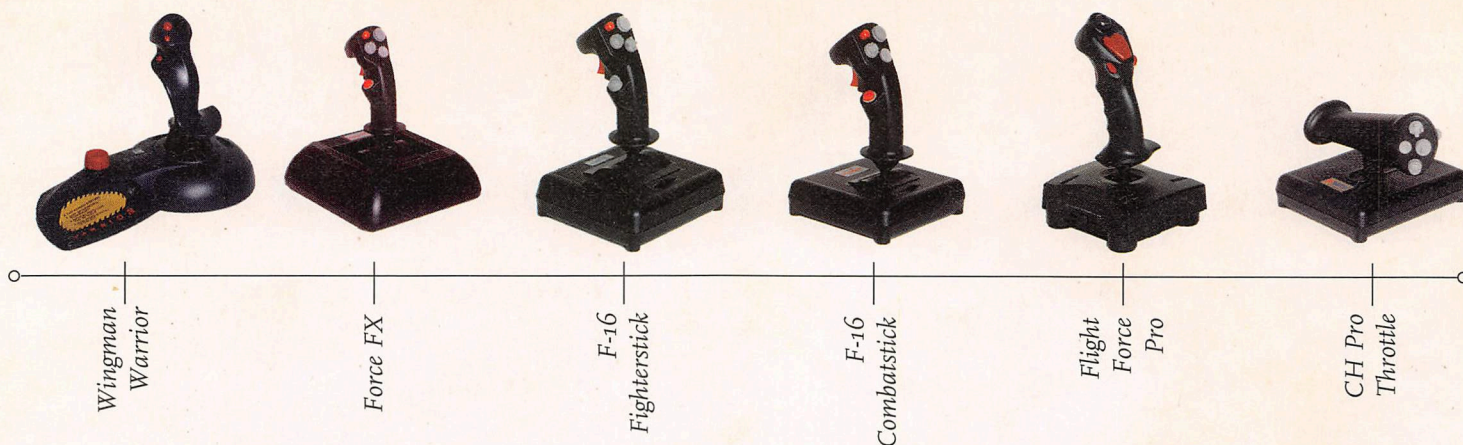
Type: 4-button, 4 x 4 way hat switches, throttle
Programmable: Yes
Ergonomics: The king of the F-16 series from CH Products. 4 programmable hat switches, 4 standard buttons and a built-in throttle wheel make this baby all the joystick you'll ever need. Programming is a simple GUI affair - while not as powerful as the Thrustmaster programming system, it can be understood and used by normal folk.
CH clearly favours functionality over military realism, so the hats are chunky with a solid click, the base has trim adjustment wheels which are scorned by Thrustmaster and the stick moves very freely with almost no resistance.
Special features: None
For: Shuns military realism for PC gaming usability.
Against: Is derided contemptuously by those who prefer military realism. Is made for extra large hands.
Summary: Not as hardcore as high-end Thrustmaster equipment, but infinitely more usable.

9/10

F-16 Combatstick

CH Products
\$199.95

Type: 4-button, 2 x hat, throttle wheel
Programmable: No
Ergonomics: Uses the same handle as the superior F-16 Fighterstick, but with 2 hat switches less, a slightly smaller base and sans native programmability. This stick will serve you well in almost any imaginably game scenario. It's still cursed with the somewhat oversized handle, and for some insane reason CH placed the throttle wheel right under the handrest flange, so every time you bank hard left your throttle finger gets mashed to pulp.
Special features: None.
For: Quality, versatile, fully-featured.
Against: Big handle and ridiculous throttle wheel placement. Needs native game support for full func-



tionality

Summary: The perfect partner to a CH Throttle.

7/10

CH Pro Throttle

CH Products \$299.95

Type: 4-button, 4 x 4-way hat switches
Programmable: Yes

Ergonomics: Using the same basic design as the standard throttle, the Pro adds 3 proper hat switches. At this high end of the throttle world you'd be hard up to find anything lacking in the Pro Throttle.

Combine this with your favourite joystick and you've got any sort of simulation covered. Does not achieve the same level of ergonomic perfection which Thrustmaster are famous for - instead of a precision military instrument of death it looks more like a big expensive toy, but hey, that's what they all are in the end.

Special features: None.

For: Big boofy thing that feels right under the hand.

Against: Button positioning could be improved.

Summary: There's the Thrustmaster TQS and there's this, take your pick based on misguided parochial loyalty.

8/10

F-16 TQS

Thrustmaster \$319.95

Type: Throttle with targeting cursor, 2 dials, 2 x 3 position switches, 4-way radio switch.

Programmable: Yes

Ergonomics: The TQS (throttle Quadrant System) typifies Thrustmaster's no-limits attitude. Many joystick makers claim their sticks to be authentic replicas, but aircraft books showing cockpit photos are easy to come by and the truth is that only Thrustmaster have any right to make that claim. The F-16 TQS looks identical to what real F-16 pilots rest their left hand on. Similarly, the F-16 FLCS joystick is also the real

McCoy (take note, the TQS needs an FLSC or F-22 to function).

The TQS was designed for the new breed of authentic jet combat sims like Back to Baghdad and Falcon 4.0. The traditional switches of throttles like the CH range and Thrusty's own WCS Mk 2 are few in number, instead rotary dials (for azimuth scans in the complex radar modelling of the new sims) and a mouse-style trackball (for easy target selection) make up most of the TQS switchware.

For most sims the WCS or and CH throttle is all you need, but for absolute realism in Falcon 4.0 the TQS + FLCS/F-22 combination makes your desk a virtual F-16.

Special features: All of it.

For: Authentic.

Against: Just a little over the top.

Summary: The God-king of throttle controllers.

9/10

F-16 FLCS

Thrustmaster \$349.95

Type: 5-button, 4 x 4-way hat switches
Programmable: Yes

Ergonomics: The jewel in Thrustmaster's crown. For simulations only, this stick has quite stiff movement in a bid to mimic the high G's pilots pull. This is achieved by way of a ring of rubber around the base of the stick which restricts movement. Some PC pilots who prefer a more fluid action have been known to cut this rubber away.

The excess of switchware intimidates some folk, but it's not long into any serious sim that you'll almost be wishing for more. Each hat switch has a different texture and design to help you get your brain around the complexity, with movement being a slight but unmistakable click that screams quality gear.

When paired with the WCS Mk 2 and any rudders you have all the virtual cockpit you'll ever need. This is one example of hard-core military influence somehow not stuffing up everyday usability. Looks amazing and performs perfectly.

Special features: None.

For: The U.S.A.F spent big \$'s getting the design right - be the beneficiary.

Against: Unfriendly programming is almost a disincentive to playing a new game.

Summary: The ultimate gaming expression of the jet fighter pilot fantasy.

9/10

WCS Mk 2

Thrustmaster \$259.95

Type: Digital/analogue throttle, 6-button, 3-way switch

Programmable: Yes.

Ergonomics: Whether it's this or the CH Pro Throttle, you're gaming isn't complete without something programmable to rest your left hand on.

We prefer the WCS Mk 2 for ergonomics, although the CH wins easily for easy programming. The way the WCS Mk 2 arcs its movement instead of the CH's sliding was the big difference, as well as the Thrustmaster's sensible button positions. In a flight sim, space combat sim or Mechwarrior sim a WCS is indispensable. With it you'll never again have to take your eyes off the screen to find a key, which is the idea. It revolutionises the way you play. Most new games come with WCS Mk 2 program files. If you do need to modify them or write your own it's not too hard to do, but is just a pain when you realise how much easier it could have been.

Special features: None.

For: A classic, enduring design.

Against: Is a bitch to program.

Summary: Makes simulation games complete.

8/10

Pro FCS

Thrustmaster \$259.95

Type: 4-button + hat

Programmable: No

Ergonomics: From a distance this looks just like the regulation Flight Control System. It shares the same

classic handle that is seen in so many Thrustmaster, but the base is a rivetted collection of steel plates and the internal springs are so stiff that you can put off buying a Bullworker for exercise. So stiff are they that Thrusty ship the stick with huge slabs of velcro to hold it to your desk. That or a G-clamp, we think. It's all about simulating real g-forces you see. CH Products don't care for this level of anal realism, instead making sticks light and pretend, but usable in everyday situations. With the Pro FCS Thrusty have gone to the other extreme. If you prefer the classic Thrustmaster handle (it's the best there is) then there are many cheaper and more sensibly sprung sticks in the Thrustmaster range.

Special features: Super-stiff springs.

For: Rivetted metal look.

Against: Springs so stiff you'll feel inadequate.

Summary: Over the top silliness.

2/10

Firebird

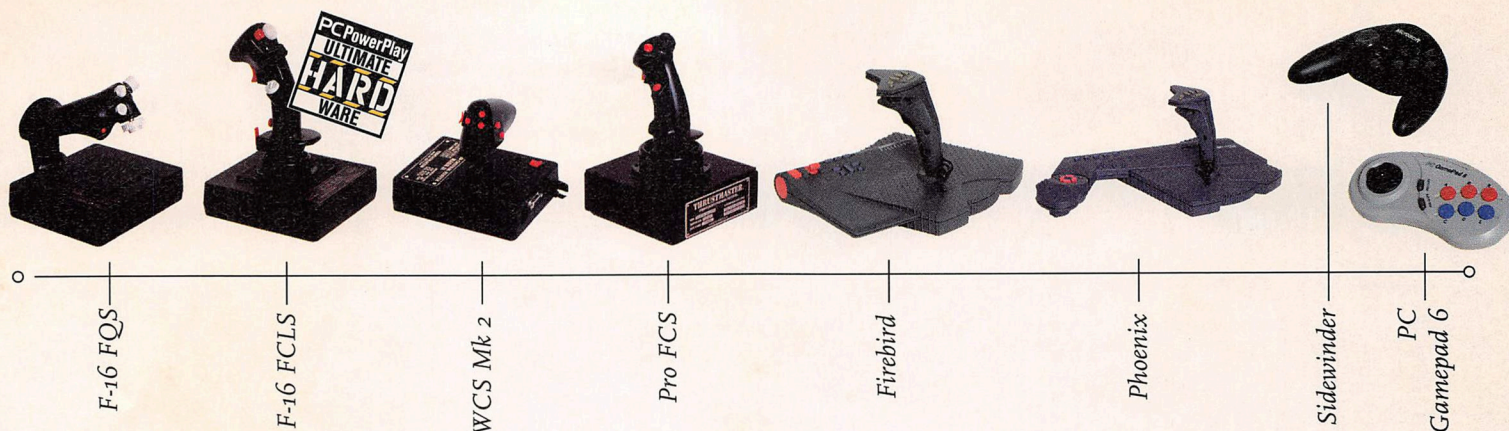
Gravis \$189.95

Type: 17-button, throttle, hat

Programmable: Yes.

Ergonomics: Gravis boardroom meeting, scene 1: "Hey everybody! Listen to me! Let's make a radical sci-fi stick that'll go off with the Wing Commander and X-Wing freaks!" Several weeks later, in the lab: "Nah, forget it Trev, making a mockup and actually testing it sounds like a both-ersome inconvenience, let's just manufacture straight from the CAD/CAM screen".

And so ended a once noble idea. Sure, the Firebird LOOKS the part, but is let down in two critical areas. First off, the buttons are just plain horrid. Tiny recessed rubber jobs that wobble about, are placed in awkward places and only perform their function when you hit them accidentally. Secondly, the handle clunks around in a jerky and most un-smooth way, making accurate and enjoyable gameplay impossible.



Special features: None.

For: Exceptionally nice programming screen.

Against: General design overall.

Summary: Do these joystick designers actually ever play GAMES?

1/10

Phoenix

Gravis

\$299.95

Type: 24-button, throttle

Programmable: Yes.

Ergonomics: The Phoenix suffers from exactly the same problems as the Firebird - but on a grander scale. It adds a few more recessed rubber buttons and a very strange throttle thing on the end.

The throttle is a knob-thing on the end festooned with more of the said useless buttons, with a very short throw and an annoying rattle and squeak.

The Phoenix is a dud, good for nothing and an ideal gift for your worst enemy, provided you can run away faster than they take to realise what you've done to them.

Special features: None.

For: Nothing.

Against: Everything.

Summary: Ugly and useless.

0/10

Control Pads

Sidewinder Game Pad

Microsoft

\$99.00

Type: D-pad, 6-button + 2 x shoulder buttons

Programmable: Yes

Ergonomics: Just about the nicest control pad you can buy - whether you own a console or a PC. The buttons have exactly the right feel, the D-pad balances tight accuracy with enough give so it's comfortable, it daisy-chains for multiplayer without going through configuration hell and it sits in your hand sooooo comfortably - hell, even the

plastic feels better than most! Pure ergonomic perfection.

Special features: Comes with easy programming software which specifies game settings that are stored on your hard drive, not in the controllers memory. This allows for multiple settings without re-programming each time you want to play a different game. Macros for long-sequence fighting game moves are easily programmed and activated.

For: So well designed that you'll soon forget you're holding it, instead somehow controlling the game by way of some miraculous mind control.

Against: A fraction more movement on the D-pad would be nice.

Summary: Along with Edit, our favourite Microsoft product.

9/10

PC GamePad 6

InterAct

\$34.95

Type: 6-button

Programmable: No

Ergonomics: A nasty piece of work. The buttons click with a loud cheap sound and feel the part too. The D-pad has almost no movement other than a spongy bit of give and its basic design hasn't improved on the original Nintendo NES pad.

Special features: None.

For: Nothing.

Against: Everything.

Summary: Don't.

1/10

PC Propad

InterAct

\$19.95

Type: 2-button

Programmable: No

Ergonomics: Far better than the other InterAct pad (above) and cheaper too, but rendered sadly useless by only having 2 buttons in a 4-button world. Great tactile movement from the pad and buttons.

Special features: Selectable autofire speeds.

For: Fantastic value.

Against: Nearly useless with only 2 buttons.

Summary: Ditch the silly autofire nonsense for 2 more buttons please Mr InterAct.

2/10

ThunderPad

Logitech

\$39.00

Type: 4-button, 2 x shoulder buttons

Programmable: No

Ergonomics: A very sharp looking bit of gear. The futuristic shape and snappy colours stand this one out. Unfortunately we don't quite know what Logitech were thinking when they designed the D-pad. It barely moves and fighting game moves like rolling the pad in nearly impossible. OK for simple platform games.

Special features: None

For: Looks great.

Against: Cheap and nasty buttons.

Summary: Reasonable for the price if you don't plan to use it for fighting games.

5/10

Phazer Pad

Thrustmaster

\$129.95

Type: 6-button, 2 x digital and analogue triggers, throttle wheel

Programmable: Yes

Ergonomics: In the typical Thrustmaster fashion the Phazer is a beautifully designed and crafted piece of work. Also in the Thrustmaster way, the Phazer features several truly innovative features - some of which work perfectly, others which are just a bit silly. The big and chunky soft rubber D-pad is the best we've ever seen. It rolls for fighting games yet also provides accurate tap-tapping for action/driving games. The buttons, also rubber, move decisively with a clear click. Around the back is the best bit - two big 'n' comfy triggers with full movement in either analogue and digital mode. This pad is heaven sent for driving games - if you prefer pads, that is. On the base is

another analogue control, this time a wheel. With the triggers it's a bit hard to see the point of the wheel, but hey, everything is programmable so you're bound to find a use for it somewhere.

Special features: 3 separate analogue controls.

For: Screams: "I am an innovative yet useful high quality gaming device, play with me now!"

Against: Isn't free with home delivery.

Summary: All the control pad a gamer will ever need.

9.5/10

Wizzard Pinball Controller

Thrustmaster

\$99.95

Type: 2-button

Programmable: No

Ergonomics: Yes, this is for real.

Stick one of these on each end of your keyboard and play pinball.

That's what they're for, that's all they're for. They even have inbuilt sensors that detect tilt! They work, we tried them. Feeling like complete tools with others watching, the experience became one of secret joy

once we were left alone. Sure, it's all a bit silly and we weren't terribly upset when it was time to send them back, but someone out there is reading this right now, thinking: "Yes! Alright! I gotta get me some of them there things!"

Special features: None.

For: Everything.

Against: They're weird.

Summary: They just are.

7/10

PC Gamepad

Gravis

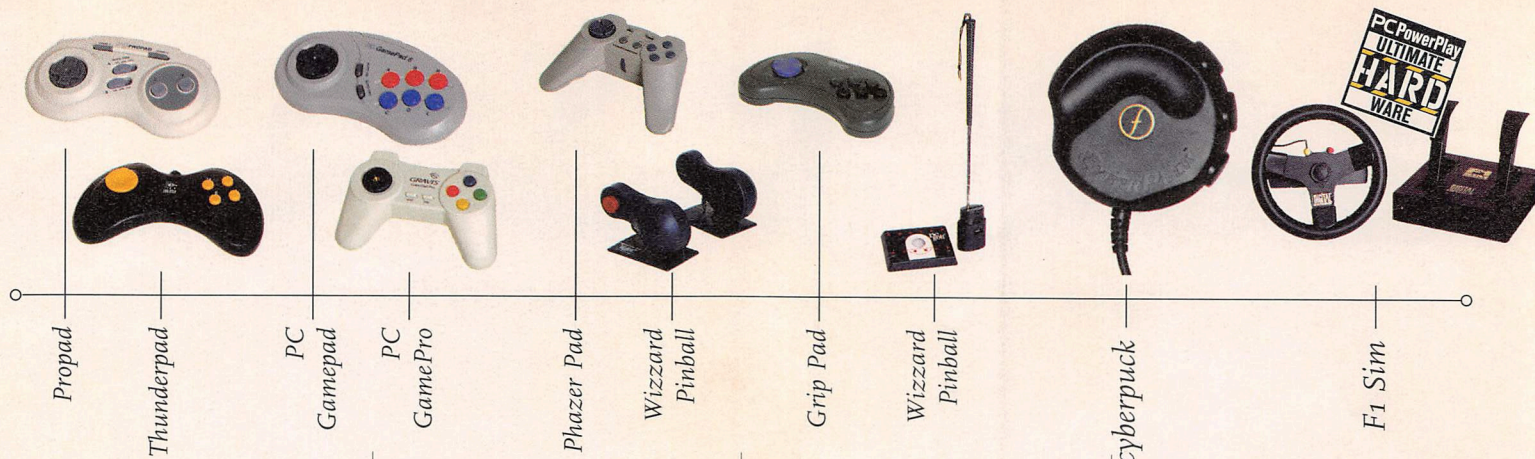
\$49.95

Type: 4-button

Programmable: No

Ergonomics: Looks and feels just like a big Nintendo SNES pad - which is an excellent thing.

Somewhat dated now, this is the classic control pad design. Big, chunky and solid is what you get. The D-pad floats freely and is great



for fighting game rolls. It has a threaded hole in the center for the supplied mini-joystick. The buttons give clear feedback but for some reason are recessed into the control pad.

Although it's an old design this pad is perfect for those occasional arcade games when only a pad will do.

Special features: Screw-in joystick.

For: No mucking around simple design.

Against: 4 buttons just doesn't cut it anymore.

Summary: For those who have to have a control pad in their lives - even if they don't know why.

7/10

Gamepad Pro

Gravis
\$89.95

Type: 4-button + 4 x shoulder buttons
Programmable: Yes.

Ergonomics: Another Playstation clone. Why do peripheral makers think the Playstation design is so great? It's not! It's usually too small, can't be laid flat for fighting games, the top shoulder buttons are never angled back against the pad like they should be for maximum comfort and the hand grip bits are so small that your thumbs are automatically positioned higher up than the buttons. We've had enough! This insidious trend must stop!

That said, the Gravis GamePad Pro is a very decent pad. The buttons are easily the chunkiest of the test units and the D-pad is a near-perfect combination of free-floating bigness and precise accuracy.

Special features: Built-in Y-adaptor.

For: Buttons par excellence.

Against: Playstation clone.

Summary: Does it look like a Playstation? No, it's a PC isn't it...

6/10

Grip-Pad

Gravis
\$69.95 (2-pack)

Type: 6-button + 2 x shoulder buttons.
Programmable: Yes.

Ergonomics: The best control pad you'll find isn't reviewed here.

It's the Sega Saturn console pad and no PC version exists (unless you buy a Diamond Edge video card, but why would you do that?). Clearly inspired by the Saturn is the GRIP from Gravis. While not identical it's near enough. Unfortunately Gravis messed with the best bits of the Sega design and the result is a pad that looks the part, but only ranks as average.

The buttons are good, but the D-pad is a little wanting. It has spongy movement which is good enough for most games, but fighting games would be tough going.

Special features: None.

For: Almost like a Saturn pad.

Against: Not close enough though.

Summary: Adequate.

7/10

Control Freaks

PC Golf

Sports Science
Inc/Mindflux
\$250.00

Type: Virtual Golf club

Programmable: No

Ergonomics:

It's exactly what it looks like - a golf club for playing your favourite golf game with. Besides looking like complete tools, our immediate concern was the safety of our computer equipment and that of our nearby colleagues. Thankfully no bits flew off during testing and the entire head is sheathed in reassuring foam rubber. Sensors in the base unit detect the passing swing on the club head and a speaker in the base emits an appropriate thwack. It really works! While a mouse or keyboard would serve you equally well, there's nothing quite like actually having the device in your hands - for some, anyway.

Special features: It's all one big special feature.

For: There's nothing else like it.

Against: You'd want to be really into golf games.

Summary: Don't you feel just a little silly?

6/10

CyberPuck

Forte Technologies
/Mindflux
\$129.00

Type: 3-button 3D mouse

Programmable: No

Ergonomics: Buy a Forte VFX1 VR headset and one of these comes with it, but the CyberPuck is also sold separately. It works adequately, but there is no advantage gained over conventional controls - indeed, you could be at a decided disadvantage if using this is a challenging game environment. In Doom-style games you move it forward and backward for an appropriate movement on screen, or turn it for directional control. Response time is fair, but not even close to a mouse or joystick.

Special features: Wave it around like you just don't care.

For: Will make you 1 or 2 new jealous new friends.

Against: Usefulness declines proportionally to need for speed and accuracy in a game.

Summary: It just is.

4/10

F1 Sim

Digital Edge/Mindflux
\$599.00

Type: Steering wheel and pedals

Programmable: No

Ergonomics: There are more than a few folks out there who upgraded their CPU and video card just for Grand Prix 2. For a few dollars (well ok, quite a few dollars more) they can complete the experience with this thing of beauty. The Digital Edge absolutely leaves the Thrustmaster T2 in its wake for usability. Behind the wheel are gear paddles and on it buttons for whatever you want. Your monitor is planted on the massive plywood base to keep it in all place and the

free-standing pedal unit stays put without any assistance. Setting it up is a breeze and once you're up and away you'll never want to play a driving game any other way.

Special features: Quick-release system to detach wheel from monitor base.

For: Hand-built, stitched leather, steel quality.

Against: \$600!!!

Summary: Multiplies driving game fun by a factor of 10.

9/10

Space Orb

Spacetecl
\$199

Type: 3D action game controller

Programmable: Yes

Ergonomics: This Australian innovation is, the only real alternative to the mouse for Quaking. It takes a couple of hours practise to really get your brain doing things intuitively, but once you're up to speed you will dominate in deathmatch. The ball barely moves, the slightest pressure produces moves which can be effected with great accuracy thanks to the proportional digital system. But the real power is the ability to combine moves which would be impossible with any other system.

Special features: Unique spherical control.

For: Fast, smooth and unbeatable in Quake.

Against: Many players - even after having mastered the Space Orb, just don't like it.

Summary: This is no gimmick, it works well and is here to stay.

7/10

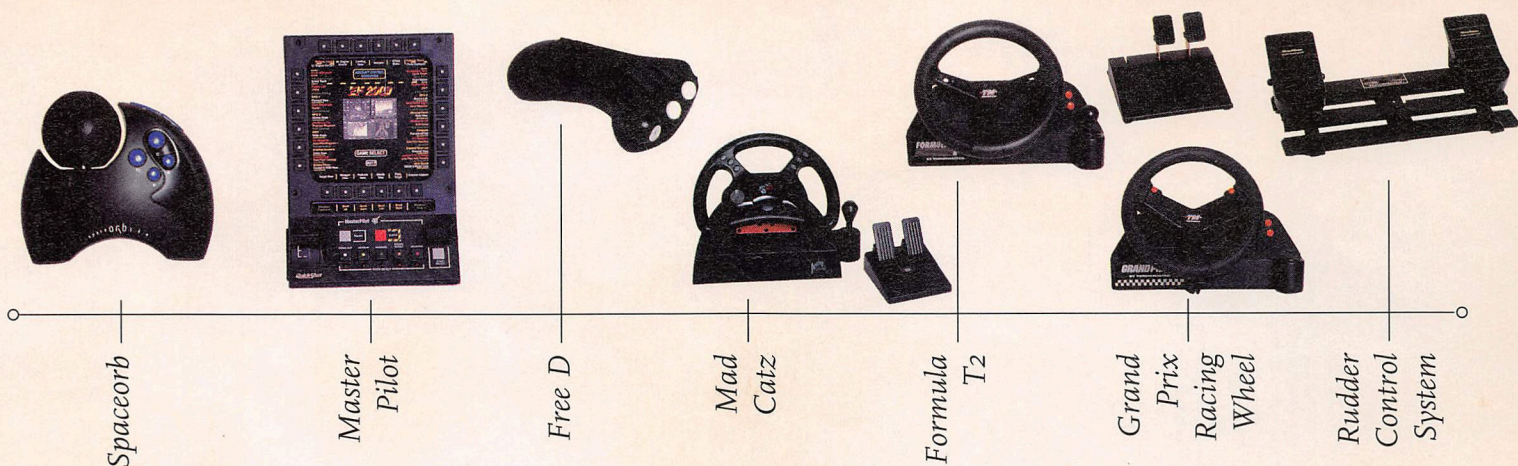
MasterPilot

Quickshot
\$199.95

Type:

Programmable: Yes.

Ergonomics: It looks like a complex device but the idea is really quite simple. This keyboard interface has cardboard inserts printed with commonly used commands for



various games. When a new game card is inserted you match it with the appropriate game data stored in the upgradable EPROM memory, then, while playing your game just punch the button on the MasterPilot instead of using the keyboard. The advantage is that all keys are grouped together and clearly labelled, the disadvantage is that there is that you're still going to have to take your eyes off the screen to use it. For the same price, any decent programmable throttle offers the same benefits, but in a much more sensible and convenient package. This, sadly for Quickshot, renders the MasterPilot completely inferior compared to a throttle.

Special features: Upgraded EPROMs promised.

For: Looks great (albeit a tad tooly) on your desk.

Against: For the same price a programmable throttle is infinitely superior.

Summary: An idea that had to be tried to prove it doesn't work.

1/10

Free D

Pegasus/Samsung \$150.00

Type: 2-button cordless 3D joystick.

Programmable: No

Ergonomics: As much as we want to be kind to a product as bravely innovative as this we find it's just not possible. This sucks, hard. We think it was conceived by a bunch of electrical engineers who have never played games before in their lives, but fancied it was a great idea that was bound to be accepted with open arms by the hardcore PC gaming community. Bzzzzt. WRONG!

When first installed it offered surprising agility with just the mouse cursor in Win 95. It was by no means a feasible replacement, but it was amusing to wave one's hand around and have the mouse cursor movement roughly correspond. It's intended use though is with

games. In Decent 2 the response times had us being nailed constantly as we couldn't turn or move with the instant response needed. In Quake it was considerably worse. Usually one's arm was flailing many feet to the left or right just to turn around on screen. Often too, the signal dropped as a result of these extreme but necessary arm movements. No, sorry, we appreciate the hard work that went into its development and all, but take this cursed thing away!

Special features: None.

For: Will attract attention for a few minutes.

Against: Is utterly useless.

Summary: Why?

0/10

Mad Catz

Home Entertainment \$159.00

Type: Wheel and pedals

Programmable: No

Ergonomics: Not just a bargain-priced wheel and pedal set, but much, much more. Sure, as a straight controller the Mad Catz can't compete with the more expensive units out there, but the addition of a D-pad on the wheel is useful with games that support it, while having 8 buttons it too good to be true. It's a big mother though, and can obscure your screen unless you're creative about mounting it or your monitor.

Special features: D-pad, 8-buttons.

For: Plenty of features for the price.

Against: Feels a bit cheap.

Summary: For pure driving pleasure look elsewhere, but for action-oriented driving games it's the one you want.

7/10

Formula T2

Thrustmaster \$299.95

Type: Wheel, 2 x pedals, 2-button

Programmable: No.

Ergonomics: Thrustmaster's only serious ergonomic blunder. Having

the gear lever set on the right means you're effectively going to be driving with your left hand only. Games like Grand Prix 2 can have you manoeuvring hard and constantly, and the heavily sprung wheel takes its toll fast. Even the calmest and most accepting of gamers end up mightily pissed off at this ludicrous design.

Still, for the price the quality makes it almost bearable. The chunky rubber wheel is the best there is - regardless of cost. The pedals exhibit another bizarre

Thrustmaster idiosyncrasy in that the base is quite large, but the 2 pedals are positioned very close together on the far right side of it. Crazy. At least the brake uses a noticeably heavier spring than the accelerator. It's insane how Thrustmaster can incorporate both the best and worst design features into one product.

Special features: None.

For: Big chunky wheel.

Against: One-handed driving.

Summary: Another almost-there Thrustmaster product, but still better than anything else for the price.

7/10

Grand Prix Racing Wheel

Thrustmaster \$199.95

Type: Wheel, 2 x analogue levers, 2 x buttons

Programmable: No.

Ergonomics: Proof that the boffins in the Thrustmaster lab really are completely mad. They engineer a wheel with levers on the back, levers which in every race car in the world are used for gear changes, but decide instead to use these levers for accelerating and braking. For gears they graft 2 tiny little buttons onto the front of the wheel. While this design dispenses with the need for a pedal set (saving you money), it takes a while to calibrate your brain to do what Thrustmaster want you too. If only they'd used the levers with the T2

design... Speaking of which, the GP uses the same central chassis as the T2, so you've still got the gear base protruding from the right, it's plugged up and looks extremely last minute.

Special features: Analogue accelerator/brake levers on wheel itself.

For: Cheap quality.

Against: Boldly designing where no designer has designed before.

Summary: Another almost-there Thrustmaster product, but still better than anything else for the price - AGAIN.

6/10

Rudder Control System

Thrustmaster. \$299.95

Type: Rudder pedals

Programmable: No.

Ergonomics: When you give Thrustmaster a simple job to do they excel. That doesn't apply to their joysticks - which are uniformly excellent (being their main trade), but these rudders are absolutely the best, both now and in the imaginable future.

Your feet are separated by a comfortable margin. As they move the whole chassis swings so both feet always remain facing forward. A sizeable degree of movement is possible, making possible fine manoeuvres and delicate landing corrections. When used with a game like Mechwarrior 2 for torso control a near perfect man-PC fusion takes place - really!

They're a bit pricey, but they feel like they'd last forever and the quality is supreme.

Special features: None.

For: Quality and feel.

Against: Cost, limited usefulness.

Summary: The best pedals out there.

9/10



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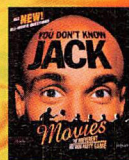
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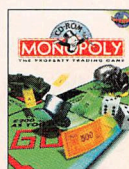
Diablo



You Don't Know Jack: Movies



WarCraft Battle Chest



Monopoly



Trivial Pursuit



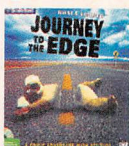
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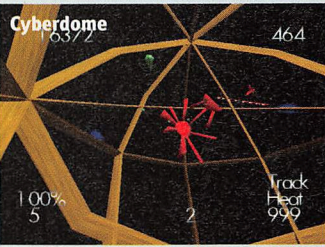
technews

Voodoo Graphics 3Dfx

This month has been absolutely huge within the 3D Scene. Voodoo Graphics are the first to sign up a very lucrative coin-op deal with Taito, who have adopted the Voodoo Graphics chipset for use in the company's latest arcade machine called the Taito Wolf.

Jointly developed by 3Dfx and Taito, the new Taito Wolf system represents the first use of PC-standard graphics and system components in coin-operated video games from Japan. Just think, that next ultra cool Taito coin op you play will be just as cool when you buy the same game for your 3Dfx enhanced PC.

3Dfx-enhanced Quake will *really* make you spooge. Now the latest patch adds support for both the new add-on mission packs.



Cyberdome

The 3Dfx software showcase just seems to keep increasing. A series of new 3Dfx enhanced titles appeared this month. Just up is Cyberdome, a primitive yet potentially innovative 3D space combat game by the Executive Producer of The 7th Guest.

Cyberdome features you as a Cyber Assassin, having to prove your worth in a VR combat environment. Graphically, it barely seems to make use of the 3Dfx's many 3D functions and is essentially just a 3D space shoot em up.

Although we only had our hands on a demo version it did seem to offer new gameplay elements. Using your auto targeter for example, will cause a certain type of craft to kamikaze into you amongst other clever twists to an old genre.

CyberDome is also compatible with Intel's new MMX processor.

Cyber Gladiators

Cyber Gladiators by Sierra, initially meant to showcase their Rendition Screamin' 3D card, has been upgraded for the 3Dfx complete with 3Dfx optimised code. Cyber Gladiators offers 10 Fighters and 10 Arenas, Motion-Captured Fight Moves, Deadly Arena Objects, with Real-Time 3D Lighting Effects, High Colour 16-bit Graphics Mode, CD Audio, Game Pad and Keyboard Support.

Quake GL

The Quake GL patch is now finally finished and pushing the 3Dfx to it's limits with breathtaking results. From translucent water to shadows from creatures, Quake never looked so good. Other advantages are that this version supports extra levels. The latest level add on called Amargon works perfectly with GL Quake ensuring that this popular title never loses its appeal.



POD

POD, the very hyped, very awaited MMX supporting, ultra fast racing game by French developers Ubisoft is now enhanced for the 3Dfx. Let's just say that the MMX making game is also the MMX breaking game. The 3Dfx version is truly amazing in it's ultra slick bi-linear filtered glory. The MMX version simply looks ordinary in comparison. All we can say to Intel is "c'est la vie."



(left) Toshinden
(below left) Tiger Shark



Scorched Planet

Scorched Planet by criterion Studios is an excellent 3D type choplifter game in the spirit of Rescue on Fractalus, way back from them 8 bit days. Sporting a patch for the 3Dfx and every other 3D card around including the Matrox Mystique. Scorched Planet is lightning fast with fully gourauded mountainous landscapes and excellent gameplay to boot.

Tigershark

Tigershark by GT Interactive is proof that a 3D accelerated game can still be bad. Tigershark is a 3rd person shoot em up where you control a hydrofoil that can speed across the ocean or dive in like a sub. Graphically Tigershark utilises all the standard goodies such as bilinear filtering and transparency, but yet, (in a very un-3D accelerated way) the visible object distance seems like only 5 feet. Before you have a chance to identify an enemy, you're ramming into them. One to avoid.

Battle Arena Toshinden

Proving that a seemingly bad game can be resurrected by 3D acceleration is Battle Arena Toshinden. An abysmal game to play on a standard PC, the 3Dfx version is as smooth as the Playstation one but with much better graphics and full use of 3D acceleration such as bi-linear filtering and translucency. Definitely worth a look at considering the small number of 3D fighting games for the PC.

3Dfx Rush

For those put off by the 2 slot solution the current 3Dfx Voodoo graphic card offers, a new chip called the Voodoo Rush will soon put an end to all that.

The 3Dfx Voodoo Rush is a high performance 3D accelerator that works in conjunction with a compatible 2D accelerator. Essentially, it's the 3Dfx Voodoo graphics accelerator in a chip that can plug into a compatible 2D graphics accelerators. Ultimately allowing for only one PCI slot to be used as opposed to two.

This unique architecture allows full simultaneous access to the multimedia features of the 2D device and the advanced 3D functions of the Voodoo Rush 3D accelerator. This means that you can have 3D

acceleration in a Window, like current Rendition solutions as opposed to the Voodoo accelerator taking over your display.

The 3Dfx Voodoo Rush is fully compatible with the current Voodoo Graphics chipset and offers equivalent 3D features. Driver support includes the 3Dfx Glide (for apps such as GL Quake), Microsoft's Direct3D API, OpenGL, QuickDraw 3D Rave and Criterion's RenderWare.

The first company planning to release a fully compatible Voodoo Rush card is Hercules, with their new Stingray 128/3D. For 2D acceleration it will

use the Alliance AT3D graphic chipset and of course the Voodoo Rush for 3D. It's due out in March but will probably slip until May.

Rendition Verite

The Rendition based Sierra Screamin' 3D hit our shores this month, \$100 cheaper than it's main rival the Creative Labs 3D Blaster. At only \$295 the Screamin' 3D offers identical performance to the 3D Blaster but with much better Windows drivers.

Bundled software includes Indycar 2, Cyber Gladiators and A-10 Silent Thunder. This is unbelievably good value and presents a threat to the 3Dfx card, if only because of how affordable it is.

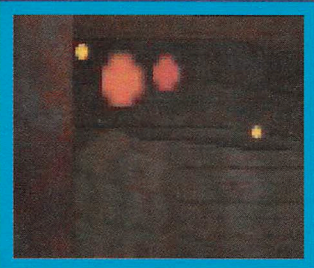
For a chance to win one of these awesome 3D accelerators, see this month's subscription competition.

Agile Warrior

A new game released for the Rendition cards is Agile Warrior, an Afterburner type 3D shoot em up where you pilot an F-111X against hordes of enemies. It features full use of the Rendition including bilinear filtering and allows for a unique two players mode, one to fly, and one to shoot.



Agile Warrior



Enhanced Rendition

Some Late breaking "you'll only hear it from PC PowerPlay" news. Circulating through the 3D rumour mill is news that Rendition are working on a new chip known as the V2200. Rumoured to be twice as fast as the current Rendition chip, it would out-perform the Voodoo/Voodoo Rush. As more news hits, you'll hear it from us first.

Quickdraw3D a new API standard set forth by Apple may just offer performance increases for the current Rendition chipset. This new API, considered among many programmers as being light years ahead of Direct3D, and as good as OpenGL, may get Rendition support.

Performance increases would occur because the Verite cards use programmable RISC processors, and QuickDraw3D, being designed from the ground up to accelerate PowerPC Risc based 3D applications make a perfect couple. For more info, go to <http://quickdraw3d.apple.com/>.

Australian 3D

Legend, the very classy Australian video card manufacturer that received the PC PowerPlay Totally Amazing award in the December Video card round up are about to astound all again.

The new Legend 3D Delta is going to use the 3Dlabs Permedia and Glint graphic processors. The Permedia is a fully integrated 2D/3D processor offering superior 2D performance with unbelievably fast second generation 3D features. It fully supports OpenGL, Windows 95, Direct3D, Windows NT and the Autodesk Heidi API for 3D Studio MAX.

The Permedia chipset, although not new, is currently one of the fastest available. Capable of delivering over 600,000 bilinear filtered, texture-mapped polygons/second and 30 million bilinear filtered pixels/second with true per-pixel perspective. WOW!

If that amazes you though, that's nothing. Previously these cards sold for US\$1700, thanks to Legend though, in Australia they're now available for an RRP of \$699 and will be available from

major retail chains such as Harvey Norman, Dick Smith, Blockbuster, Games Wizards and Software Today stores.

Enhanced 3Dfx

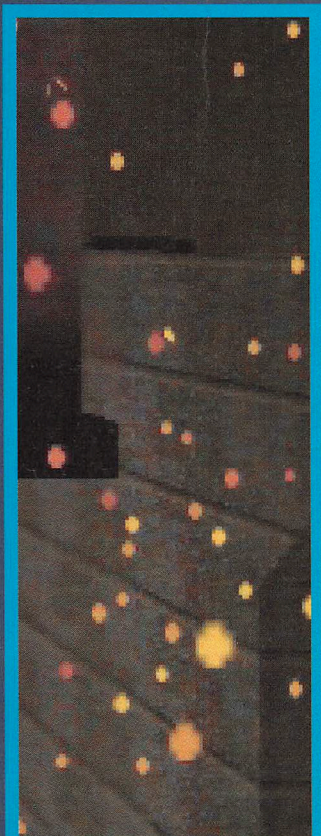
Finally, Certain developers have been privy to information pertaining to Voodoo's latest chipset, codenamed Banshee, it is expected to provide performance similar to 3Dfx's current XS100 Obsidian chipset.

The Obsidian chipset was designed by Voodoo to meet the performance requirements of premium arcade games and is capable of producing graphics the quality of Sega's Daytona. The Obsidian can deliver perspective correct, Z-buffered, LOD (level of detail) MIP mapped, advanced filtered texture-mapped graphics with incredibly fast fill and polygon rates.

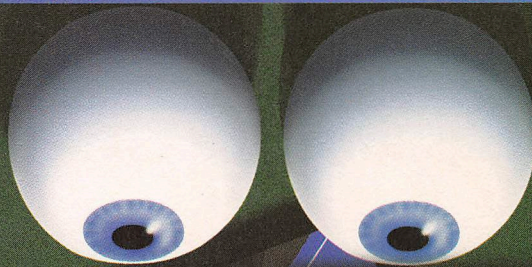
It also supports radical special effects such as per-pixel fog, translucency, transparency, composite textures, animated textures, texture morphing, and anti-aliasing. Feathers in the Obsidian cap include usage within the U.S. military for paratrooper VR simulations.

The Banshee board is expected to be "within consumer reach" and should be appearing around early 98 with chipsets available to 3Dfx OEM partners by the end of this year.

Jere Lawrence

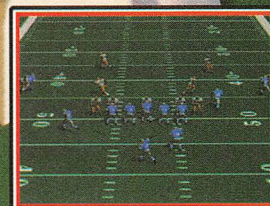
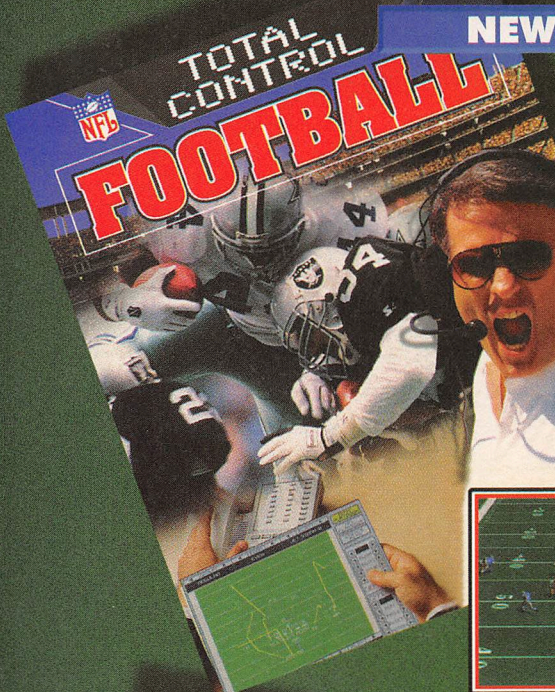


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Kittyhawk Plus - Net PC/NC

Take a look at the way of the future
- looks a bit like a video doesn't it?
Just hope it's not a betamax...



It's been talked about for a while now, but the Net PC is finally beginning to become a reality for Australian consumers. The Kittyhawk Plus is around the same size as a VCR and uses the TV for display. Its main use is for the internet, but can be used for other applications, and will run almost any OS. It's designed and developed by Set-Top Industries, an Australian company who are selling the units complete, and also have interest from rental companies looking at leasing them out. Retailers like Radio Rentals and the like are looking into leasing out the units with an initial

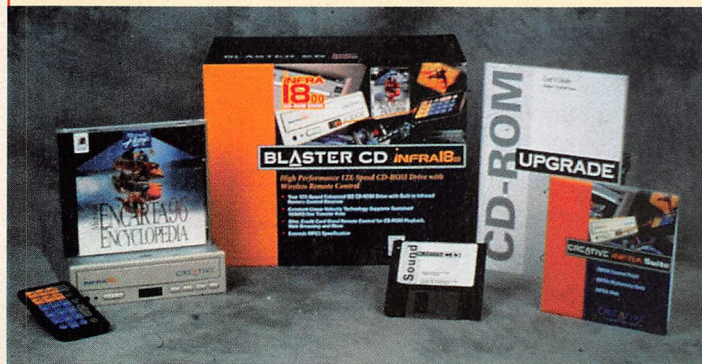
setup fee, in combination with a monthly or weekly rate for ongoing use. To buy, the multimedia Set-Top Box will set you back around \$1100-1200, but for that you get the AMD 5x86 CPU with a 133MHz chipset, 16MB Ram, a CD ROM, 33.6k modem (expandable to ISDN), and 16 Bit Stereo, as well as all the internet software you can poke a stick at. Along with this, there's the nifty little feature they call 'CUPID', (Constantly Upgrading Performance Information Directly) which automatically updates software and hardware drivers for you. It has to be the way of the future - an affordable, low maintenance Internet terminal and Network Computer that doesn't aim to replace the home PC but to augment it, and this one is Australian too.

Sound Blaster Infra 1800 CD ROM Drive

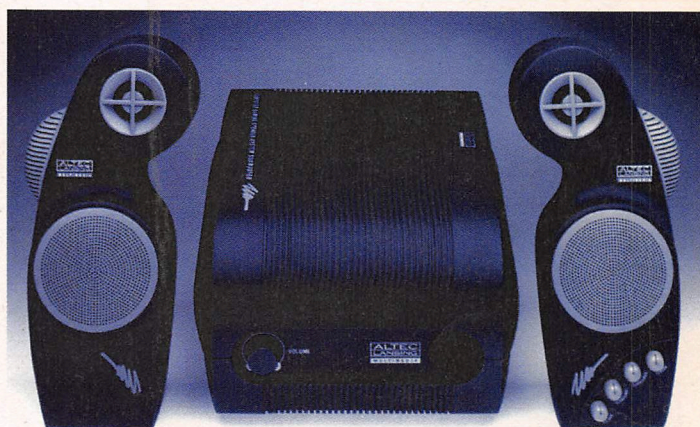
CD ROM drives have been around for a while, and will soon be outmoded and unnecessary when DVD gets here, but all the reports are that DVD is going to be a while, so upgrading your CD ROM is still a viable option. Creative's latest, the Infra 1800 is more than your basic 'stick a CD ROM in and play it' kind of thing. The IDE CD ROM itself runs at a respectable 12 speed, and Creative promise transfers speeds of up to 1800 kb/sec and less than 150 mb/s access time. It's the little differences that mean so much though, and the Infra 18 comes with a pocket-sized infrared remote

control. It sounds a bit wanky, but you can do more than just turn the volume up and down, it can also be used to direct your web browser (either MSIE or Netscape) and can also emulate the mouse for other applications. It's not an earth shattering breakthrough, but if you're in the market for a new CD ROM then you could do worse. They retail for \$299.

It's got all you need to run the latest games, plus an infra-red remote controll as well.



Altec Lansing Multimedia - ACS 55 Sound System



It would certainly get the award for the strangest looking PC speakers we've seen in a while, but that aside the ACS 55 looks like a very cool sound system for your PC. The three piece system is comprised of 2 speakers and a subwoofer, and delivers 5 channels of surround sound, using Dolby Multimedia Surround circuitry. Each speaker has two 3 inch drivers, one for front oriented sound and another for side sounds, and the subwoofer adds 30 watts of

power and bass response to the overall experience. So with the ACS 55, screaming past Damon Hill in GP2 really sounds like you're screaming past him. In addition to this, WaveCube software is included with the system, which can be used to upgrade your sound card to wavetable for configurable levels of sound. So they may look a bit silly, but they do sound very nice indeed, and at around \$400 are reasonably priced too.

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Sound Blaster AWE 64 Gold

The Creative Labs Sound Blaster juggernaut rolls on, and the latest in their long line of releases is the AWE 64 Gold. Not only will it synthesize up to 64 voices at any one time, which doubles the previous AWE 32, but it also comes with gold RCA sockets for noise free outputs. They call it the 'ultimate sound card for the audiophile',

and it does boast an impressive array of some of the latest sound related technologies.

Instead of using hardware to control all of the 64 voices, the AWE 64 splits the sound into two sets of 32; one software controlled, one hardware controlled.

Creatives' chief scientist Dave Rossum, acknowledges that software control chews up valuable processor power, but according to him since the Pentium Processor became commonplace there's a glut of bandwidth in home PCs. We're not so sure that we'd agree with that - compare frame rates in any game with and without sound and you'll very probably see a difference. That aside though, the AWE 64 does sound very good indeed. It comes with 4Mb RAM (expansion modules can boost this up to 28 Mb), and 1Mb ROM for MIDI samples, and is capable of full duplex recording and playing of sound samples.

3D sound

There are two new sound cards in the AWE range though, the AWE 64 and the AWE 64 Gold and it's not just the gold RCA sockets that sets the AWE 64 Gold apart from the standard AWE 64. With the Gold there's 1Mb of Midi samples on board, whereas with the plain AWE 64 it's only half a meg, and the Gold comes

with a Spdif (Sony/Phillips Digital interface output) for connection to a DAT or the like, as well as 3D enhancements that apparently expands the spaciousness of normal 2D speakers - but we couldn't discern much of a difference between an older Blaster model and the AWE 64 Gold with our speakers.

Voice control

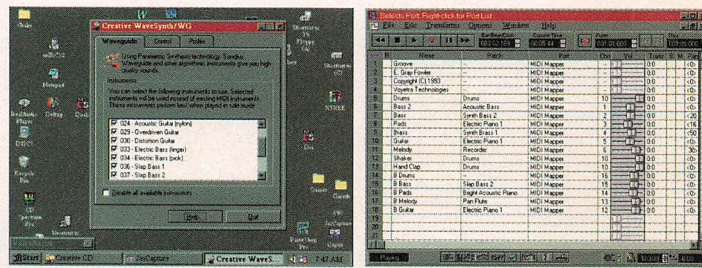
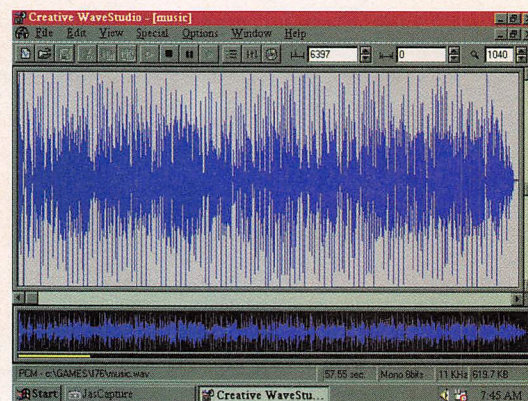
Being a plug and play card, it's nice and easy to install under Windows '95, and there's plenty of useful software that comes bundled with it as well. Apart from the usual Creative

multimedia decks, there's full copies of Magic Carpet 2, Eradicator, Web Phone lite, Vienna sound font studio, the latest MSIE, MIDI orchestrator plus, real audio player, a microphone, and Creative Text and Voice Assist. Voice Assist allows you to set phrases and words for commonly used actions - say 'bugger off Windows' a few times into the microphone, and then you're ready to shut down whenever

you get the urge to tell Windows to bugger off, and Text Assist will read the text of almost any Windows application out loud to you. They both seem to be a bit gimmicky, and though they were great fun to play with for a few minutes we

doubt whether they would have much lasting value for most people. The card does sound very good though, and that's one of the most important parts of any sound card. The AWE uses the EMU 8000 chipset for digital effects which interpolates the sound waves being played rather than just taking a digital sample, and the difference between an older Sound Blaster 16

and the AWE 64 Gold with Magic Carpet was very obvious. The clarity and effects of the game were enhanced significantly, though 3D sound wasn't noticeably affected. However, for those looking for a top of the range sound card, whether for serious sound recording or just to get the most from games at \$399 the AWE 64 Gold is most definitely an option worth considering.



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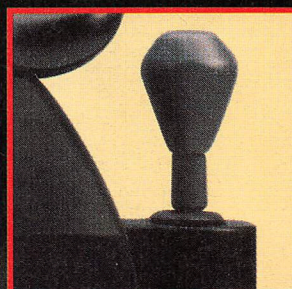


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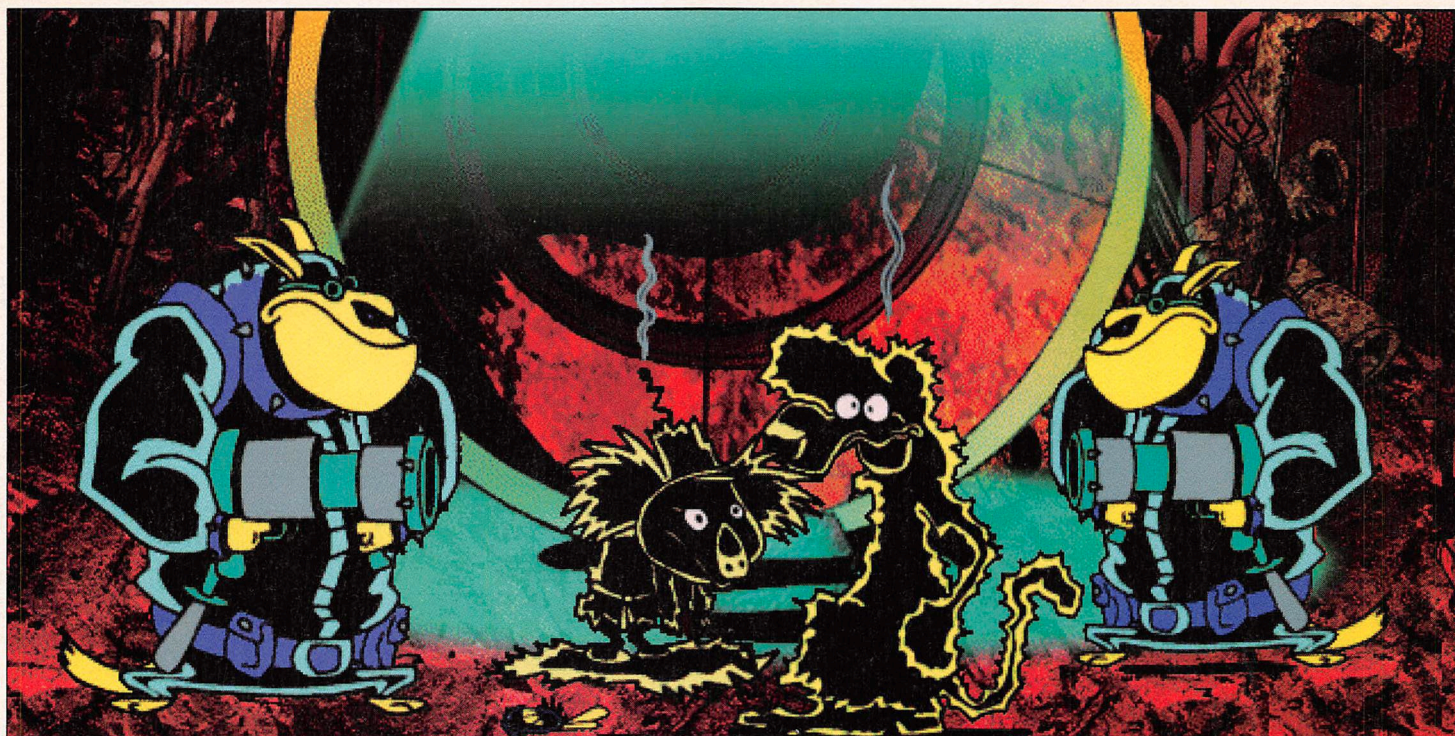
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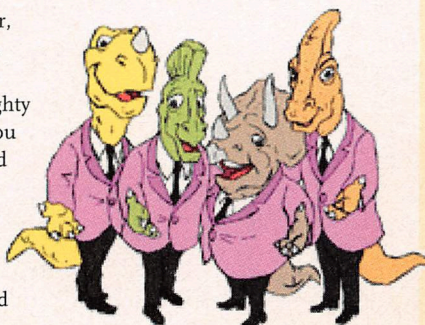


Castle Infinity

Internet multiplayer games are all the rage nowadays; Ultima Online (eventually), Meridian 59, and The Realm as well as a host of others. Now thanks to the Starwave Corporation there's also an online game for the kiddies. It's kind of like a cross between a platformer, an avatar-based chat room and a puzzle game, looks great and is guaranteed not to have any naughty language or content. Provided you have an Internet connection (and Windows 95), the only costs involved are to purchase the CD ROM - there are no time-based usage charges. It's has a fun, cartoon style interface, and

the aim is to have a place where kids can meet and enjoy themselves online, where they will learn social skills as well as working within groups.

Sega Ozisoft 9317 0000

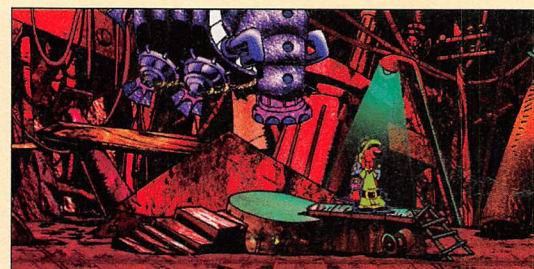


Journey to the Edge

If you can tolerate a Koala Bear with a cheesy Indian accent, and a Dingo with an accent that swaps between strong cockney and an actor-doing-a-bad-impression-of-an-ocker, and you've just become a member of the teenager demographic then you might just enjoy this silly and fun adventure from Broderbund. With a cute cartoon interface, and a scrolling 360 degree perspective Journey is both visually pretty and easy to control and play. The main character is Koala Lumpur, a Koala (of undetermined origin) who's trained in the mystical arts - well, sort of trained anyway. He knows some mystical stuff, but obviously not all that much,

because in trying to cast an incantation he unlocks the forces of big badness and brings about events which could lead to the "comedy apocalypse". You take the role of a fly (It's not explained why, so don't ask me ok?) and you buzz around with Koala Lumpur in tow, taking on the tasks as they occur. The puzzles aren't easy, and there's plenty of toilet humour too - some of it even funny! All up it's a good, fun game that will challenge and amuse the kiddies.

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Internet Explorer 4.0 vs. Netscape Communicator



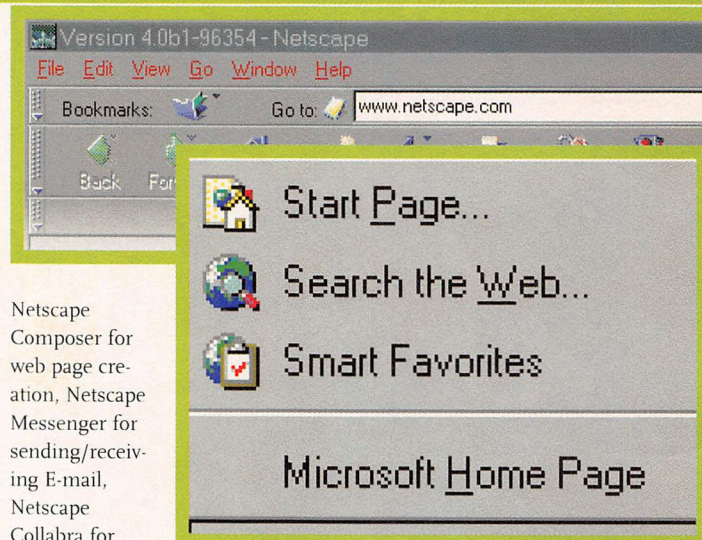
Browse the Web

Microsoft and Netscape are about to unleash their latest browsers onto the awaiting public. Netscape has been first off the mark with two public beta releases Preview release 1 and 2 (they like to call them preview releases?) Microsoft are very close to releasing their first public beta which should be due very soon (should be available by the time you read this, hopefully).

(World Wide Web Consortium) as the HTML 3.2 standard.

One of the most important new HTML features is CCS level 1 (Cascading Style Sheets) these great new set of HTML tags will allow Web page designer to create pages with common styles very easily. The pages to be displayed using CCS can then query a users browser configuration so that the web page can be displayed as the creator intended with all formatting and page layout intact.

Microsoft Internet Explorer already has basic support for CCS, the specification has not been fully ratified as yet but Microsoft has said they will have full support for CCS in IE4.0. Netscape has also included CCS into their latest Browser Navigator 4.0 but have also added support for JavaScript Style Sheets, which will give web pages the ability to be truly dynamic through Netscape's Java scripting language.



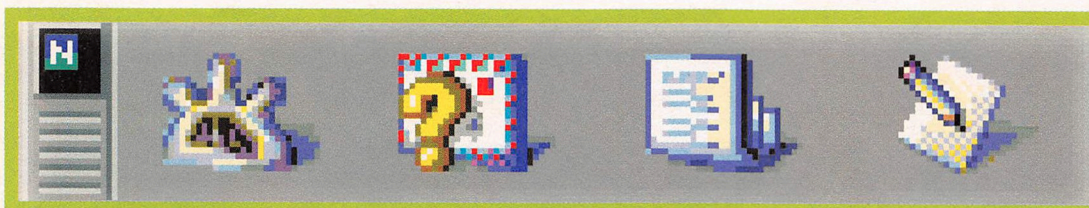
Netscape Composer for web page creation, Netscape Messenger for sending/receiving E-mail, Netscape Collabra for group discussion and Netscape Conference for real-time collaboration. What this means is that you get a total Internet solution, be you are a games player or an Internet Software developer.

Composer, Messenger, Collabra, Conference

Composer - will allow for the creation of simple HTML pages, although you will still need to dabble in HTML coding if you want to include Java classes or ActiveX controls and the more involved HTML tags.

Messenger - is very much enhanced and not only allows for HTML in E-mail messages but will also offer IMAP4 (Internet Mail Access Protocol) support. IMAP is an new alternative to POP3 (Post Office Protocol) POP3 automatically download all new messages when you log in, With IMAP4 all files are saved on the mail server and messages can be selectively downloaded.

Collabra and conference - will mainly be used in an office situation, although gamers and Internet Heads alike might find a use for the discussion software.



The Netscape Communicator control panel

These latest browsers will be radically different from each other in appearance, but will basically add to the browser concept in different ways. Netscape has kept the browser itself pretty much identical in function to the older versions but has incorporated it as part of the Communicator suite, while Microsoft have decided to Integrate the browser tightly into the operating system.

These new browsers will of course incorporate the latest in HTML tags, some of these tags were standardised by the W3C

Netscape released their first beta of Communicator to the public, but since then have released a less buggy second beta which lives up to expectations.

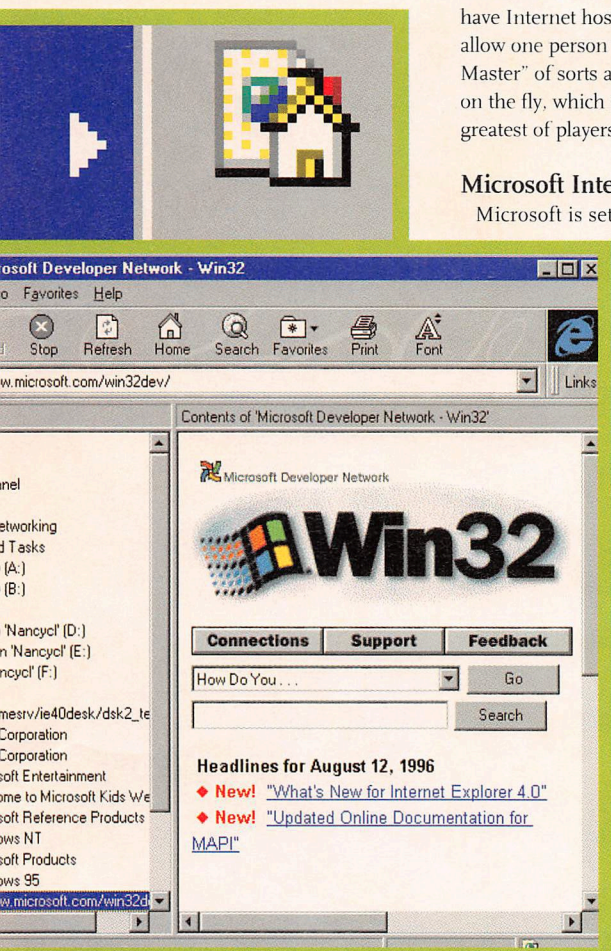
Netscape Communicator

Netscape believe they have got a total Internet/Intranet solution for everyone, which I believe will appeal to a lot of consumers out there. Navigator Web browser is now a part of a bigger picture called Netscape Communicator. Netscape communicator encompasses five core components in the suite, Netscape Navigator for web browsing,

Netscape Navigator V4.0

Navigator has gone through a major cosmetic and structural face-lift, Navigator is now more in-tune with the Windows 95/NT interface, Tool bar buttons now become 3D when the mouse pointer passes over them (ala Internet Explorer 3.0x). The whole interface has been improved for easier navigation, all Communicator components can now be accessed through a floating tool-bar for quicker access. Navigator 4.0 has finally done away with the four preference options that were very poorly integrated within Navigator 3.0. Instead there is now one easy to use hierarchical browser

type dialogue box which allows all configuration options to be accessed from this one central location. Navigator has also finally been given the TAB option of Internet Explorer that allows you to jump to links in the document with the TAB key.



The are a few other small changes which all add up to a browser to be reckoned with.

Just In Time

Navigator 4.0 has also had a major Java boost in the form of a JIT (Just In Time) compiler which will give Navigator much needed Java performance around the same speed as Internet Explorer 3.0x. Navigator 3.0's Java speed left a lot to be desired, with the addition of a JIT compiler it has gained a much-needed boost. A JIT compiler gains its execution speed by decoding a whole bunch of Java instructions then it then places them into a cache to be executed at the machines' native instruction speed (or close to) instead of decoding then executing each instruction one after the other. Using a JIT, Java can approach the speed of compiled C++ programs (fast enough for games?... maybe!).

JIT compilers will allow Web page developers to incorporate more processor intensive Java Applets into their

HTML code allowing for the creation of amazingly dynamic Web pages. For example we could see the likes of a Quake /HEXEN /DUKE3D etc level editor written in Java that would allow you to create your levels while on-line, and then play them with your friends from all over the world. We could even have Internet hosted games that would allow one person to be a "Dungeon Master" of sorts and create the levels on the fly, which should tax even the greatest of players.

Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0

Microsoft is set to change how you view the web with the latest release of Internet Explorer, with such new technologies as Active Desktop, Active Setup, and Dynamic HTML to name a few. Microsoft will tightly integrate Internet Explorer 4.0 with Windows 95/NT and it will change the way Windows 95 looks and feels all for the better though.

Active Desktop -

This is the tight integration between the browser and the desktop, which basically means that the browser will become your desk-

top and your desktop will become the browser. Tight integration with the desktop will allow all resources on your computer to be viewed as web pages and all remote resources on the network will be available to you as if they were stored on your local machine.

Active Setup - This is what I have been waiting for a long time what it does is allow downloads and Installs over the Internet to be restarted from where they left off. So if your line happens to go down or your computer system goes belly up you don't have to start a 15Mb file download again. About time too I say!

Dynamic HTML - This will allow web page content to be updated while the user is viewing the page and will allow your page elements to be move around the screen with no Java or ActiveX controls involved.

There are numerous other possible inclusions in the soon to be released public beta like FrontPad which is like the HTML editor supplied with Communicator and is really a cut

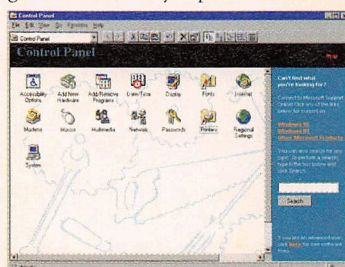
down version of FrontPage.

AutoComplete will allow the automatic completion of URL's while they are typed by retrieving information stored regarding previous site visited.

A third pane on the right hand side of the screen has been added for the receiving of live content like stock tickers, news etc.

ActiveX

ActiveX is Microsoft's answer to Interactive distributed components for the Internet. ActiveX controls are basically OLE (Object Linking and Embedding) controls made more efficient for the Web. Don't get me wrong, ActiveX is a very powerful way for incorporating components into web pages and because its roots are with OLE there are tons of programmers already capable of creat-



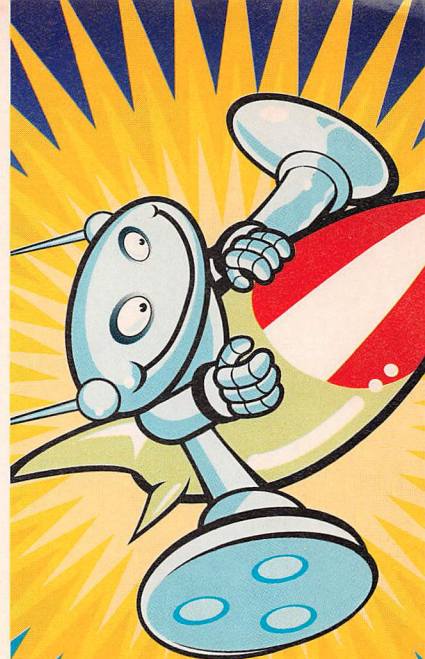
MS Internet Explorer 4.0 control panel

ing or have created ActiveX components. ActiveX controls for example can allow a Word Document to be embedded in a Web page and as long as the user has the appropriate viewer on their computer they will be able to see it or even edit it if they have the full version of Word. ActiveX could also allow games or game components to be inserted into Web pages, which would open up enormous possibilities, imagine the ability to play games with levels that span the entire globe.

The winner is?

Microsoft and Netscape both have very powerful Internet solutions that are nearly ready for full release to the public, which one will succeed? I personally believe there is room for them both, I guess it's individual taste as to which way you prefer to browse and work on the Internet. Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0 will offer users the ability to use their PC as if it were part of the Internet and view each resource whether it's remote or on your local machine as a web page. This may not appeal to all users, as I am sure there will be people who will prefer to keep their browser as their browser and their desktop as their desktop. Which component technology will be victorious ActiveX or Java I guess only time will tell, I strongly believe that there is room for them all.

Garry Wallis



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When Windows doesn't work

>q I'm having trouble with the add/remove programs utility in Control Panel in Windows 95. I have unknowingly deleted games (from your CDs), via file manager that have used this utility in its installation. Now I can't get rid of the damn things from the list on the utility. What do I do? Also I accidentally moved lots of WAV's from another drive to my c: drive but instead of writing "move *.wav c:\windows" I wrote "move *.wav k:\windows". Now all my sound files are in a file called windows on my k: drive. Can I get them back. I'll be annoyed if I can't. Kent Jones
Bunbury, WA

>a Prepare to be annoyed then. Your sound files are well and truly lost in the depths of your K: drive. To be more precise they are still there, just that they happen to be appended to each other to create one, large, file whose contents are all of your WAV files that you wanted to move. Extracting these files out individually is nigh impossible, you're likely to have better chances recovering your WAV files by just trying to undelete them with the appropriate Windows or Norton utility - but there's a chance you've already written over some of the space on your drive where your WAV files used to reside. As for the Windows 95 Add/Remove utility, it is rather annoying isn't it? You think it'd be smart enough to check what products actually exist or not.

The Add/Remove list for Windows 95 is stored in your SYSTEM.DAT file located in your Windows directory. There's not a lot you can do in terms of manually editing this file but, as it happens, there's a third party utility called PowerToys which will clear out this listing for you. You can find PowerToys at <http://www.tucows.com/>. It's a good little set of utilities that adds extra features and functions that should have been a part of Windows 95 in the first place.

When Windows still doesn't work

>q Whenever I by your magazine and run the games for Windows some of them have windows that pop up with the message in them that says 'Unexpected DOS Error 21.' Firstly what does this message mean and secondly how can I fix it? Liam Mitchell
Beechboro, WA

>a It seems, Liam, that you're running Windows 3.1 and, unless I'm mistaken, almost all the Windows games you'll find on the PC PowerPlay CD are either native Windows 95 games or true DOS games. The error you see is Windows 3.1 trying to tell you that it can't run the 32bit program you're trying to run. Specifically, it's an error reported when you try and run a 32bit Windows program under Windows 3.1 (16bit) or Windows 3.1 and an out-of-date Win32s installation which can't handle the 32bit program. Installing a new version of Win32s won't help you here because the games take advantage of Windows 95 features that you'll only find in Windows 95. As such, if you want to play the Windows games on the PCPowerPlay CDs you'll need to install Windows 95.

Max pain

>q I have a bit of a problem. Recently I decided to transfer my GRAVIS ULTRASOUND MAX from my Cyrix 86DX2/80 to my Cyrix 686 P-120. Unfortunately after transfer-

ring the sound card and all necessary data, the GRAVIS refused to work. After the installation I ran a diagnostic program which came with the GRAVIS. Half way through the diagnostic the screen went blank then displayed the message, 'card trying to create multiple IRQ press F3 to continue or F4 to reboot'. I was puzzled, the GRAVIS had no problems working with the 486. I checked the autoexec.bat and config.sys files to make sure that all necessary drivers were installed and all were. I just don't know what to do. Presently I have a rather antiquated piece of sound card technology in the 686, that being a Creative Labs Sound Blaster Pro and I can unfortunately say that this is working fine, but I still would rather the great sounds of my GRAVIS containing wavetable synthesis.

The specs of my computer are as follows:

Cyrix 686 P-120 at 100Mhz, SL-586V (Pentium) motherboard with an Award Plug 'n' Play Bios, 430VX chipset and 256k pipelined burst cache, 16Mb RAM, Trio 64V+ graphics card and 420Mb hard disk. Justin Kavanagh
East Brighton, VIC

>a This sounds very much as if the IRQs and DMAs that the GRAVIS wants to use have been reserved by your Award Plug 'n' Play BIOS. You see the biggest problem with Plug and Play is that it's about as plug and play as sticking a headphone jack into a power point. PnP just hasn't lived up to its name sake.

You should enter your BIOS and look for a section dedicated to PnP devices or IRQs and DMAs. When you find it you may find that some IRQs have been 'reserved' for 'PCI/PNP' devices while others have been reserved for 'ISA/EISA'. The GUS is an ISA card and so will only be able to use IRQs and DMAs allocated to ISA devices. The reason your Sound Blaster works is that it's using an IRQ that's already reserved for ISA whereas your GUS may be configured for other IRQs. The solution: change the IRQ and DMA values that you wish to use

to ISA/EISA. Some safe settings that are unlikely to be used by any other devices, and happen to be the settings I use with my GUS, are IRQs 7 and 11, and DMAs 6 and 7. Edit your CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT to match. Set your ULTRASND environment variable to: SET ULTRASND=220,6,7,11,7 [another excellent setting if you have conflict problems is 220,6,7,7,7 - and means you only need to free up one IRQ]. There's no real need to use the GRAVIS installation/diag program. If all your software is already copied across just make sure you have your SET ULTRASND, SET ULTRADIA and SET ULTRA16 in your AUTOEXEC.BAT as well as ULTRINIT. If it you want to see if it all works fine try playing a MOD file or, better still, auto-detecting games like Quake.

Mum's the word. Hopefully.

>q Everytime I load up my computer it says this:
Starting Windows 95...
Type the name of the command interpreter (eg. C:\WINDOWS\COMMAND.COM) A>
I have recently formatted my hard drive and I don't know how to get it back to working order. I tried installing Windows 3.11 but it says it cannot open or find my system files, even though I copied them onto my hard drive. SAVE ME BEFORE MY MUM FINDS OUT!!
Thanks,
Maurice Oldham
Newcastle, N.S.W

>a Maurice, if you're still alive by the time you read this then you're in for a rather depressing realisation: the problem with formatting drives is that they have a nasty habit of losing all the information on them. Permanently. Your situation sounds somewhat strange however. If you had formatted your drive then you'd be unlikely to get any sort of 'Starting Windows 95' message [although the resilience of Windows 95 in this aspect doesn't surprise me]. Rather it sounds like you've managed to delete COMMAND.COM

and most likely a whole heap of other files as well. This is certainly something that would cause Windows 95 to spew [rather like waking up in the morning and finding a leg missing]. Considering you've since tried to install Windows 3.11, I think it's safe to say that your system is - how shall I put it - well and truly bugged.

Regardless, we can save your butt before your mum finds out!

Step 1: Don't panic. Well, not much anyway.

Step 2: Find the Windows 95 installation CD. It has to be somewhere in your house. If you're not sure where, casually walk up to mum and say 'Just out of interest, where is our Windows 95 CD? I want to look at the pretty colours on the cover'. Hopefully, she'll believe you.

Step 3: Install Windows 95! Luckily, Windows is relatively easy to install. Run SETUP.EXE from the CD-ROM and follow the instructions.

Optional Step 4: You've probably (but I hope not) realised by now that you can't seem to access your CD-ROM. This, my boy, is a problem. Your best bet here is to re-install DOS (you must have this lying around as you seem to have Windows 3.11 lying around). After this is done you'll have to install CD-ROM drivers for your CD-ROM. With a bit of luck you'll have a disk lying around somewhere called, strangely enough, 'CD-ROM drivers'. This disk may have come with the machine or your sound card (if you have one). Stick the disk in and look for a batch file like INSTALL.BAT or CDINSTALL.BAT. Use a bit of common sense, you'll find the installation program somewhere. After the drivers are installed you should be able to boot DOS, access your CD-ROM and install Windows 95.

If all else fails because you can't find these disks or your computer refuses to co-operate with you then run into your room, pack your bags and then present yourself to your mother, with a puppy dog look, and say 'Mum, I think I've stuffed the PC up, it won't boot anymore. If you want to throw me out I'll understand.' and then point sadly at your packed bags. Mum, being a mum, will probably understand and all will be well. Good luck! Everybody here at PC PowerPlay is supporting you!

How not to print T-shirts

> q I am wanting to buy a new motherboard and CPU, but

I am trying to decide what type I should get. Does a 686 133Mhz CPU have roughly the same processing power as a Pentium 166, and is the 686 series as reliable as a Pentium? (I have heard that 686's frequently stall). I have a few hundred dollars to spend and I would like my purchase to have grunt and reliability. Can you please tell me the type I should go for. The use of the processor will be put to is graphics editing, word processing and high-spec. games i.e. Quake and Rally Challenge.

PS. Can you also tell me how to print on T-shirts. I have an Epson Stylus Colour 500 (720 x 720dpi), and the manual doesn't tell you how to.

Thankyou.

Aaron Collins

Gympie, QLD

> a How can you print on T-shirts? Depends, can

you stuff a T-shirt through your printer paper tray? No no, only kidding. You see the reason the manual doesn't tell you how to print on T-shirts is because... you can't print on T-shirts using a printer. T-shirt printing normally involves copious amounts of ink, templates, pressure and sometimes heat. Printers were designed to print on paper, not fabric.

Deciding what to buy when upgrading your PC is always a toughie. Everyone will tell you something different, and my personal advice is this: get the most efficient motherboard you're willing to fork out raw cash for and then buy as fast a CPU as you can afford. Reliable names for super efficient motherboards include SuperMicro, Gigabyte, Tyán and Abit to name just a few. Get a motherboard with either the HX [Triton II] chipset or, the very latest, TX [Triton IV] chipset - which should be available by the time you read this.

As for a Cyrix 686 vs an Intel Pentium, again you'll hear votes of confidence from both sides but the general rule is this: yes, Cyrix CPU's DO outperform Intel chips of the same MHz value, but to say a Cyrix 133 would outperform an Intel 166 is unlikely and very debateable. Cyrix chips are easily as reliable as a Pentium, but they have had their share of unfair rumours in the past.

Random Access

Welcome to Random Access, a new column dedicated to interesting, useful and informative tips about anything and everything to do with your PC. Be it hardware, software, DOS or Windows you'll find tips and tricks listed here every month.

If you have some tips of your own you'd like to share with other gamers such as yourself feel free to send your tip into Setup and, if we publish it, we'll be sure to credit and print your name.

Reducing disk thrashing under Windows 95

A good rule of thumb when using Windows 95 is to ignore anything it recommends, because most of the time it has absolutely no idea. Your virtual memory settings is one such example.

Open up Control Panel -> System -> Performance -> Virtual Memory and click the button titled 'Let me specify my own virtual memory settings.' Set your minimum and maximum values to 32M or, if you use a particularly intensive machine, have less than 16M of RAM or just happen to be paranoid about this sort of thing, set both to 64M.

This will improve overall system response simply because Windows won't be thrashing your disk when it has to enlarge or shrink your swapfile as programs and memory dictate - the swapfile will already be big enough to handle any demands made by Windows.

Maximum memory for games

Many games these days still live in the all powerful and ultimate gaming platform, DOS. Getting the most out of your DOS games often requires freeing up as much memory as possible. There is a simple rule to follow here: load only what you need.

I have a DOS boot setup specifically for games called, funnily enough, DOOM BOOT. DOOM was the first game that deserved its own boot and, considering its requirements have passed on over to other games of the genre, especially those that make use of DOS4GW, it made sense to keep this boot around for the many DOS games that grace my PC.

The ultimate DOOM boot (CONFIG.SYS only) is this:

```
device=c:\dos\himem.sys
dos=high
buffers=30
files=30
shell=c:\command.com c:\ /p /e:512
```

Your AUTOEXEC.BAT should contain only your PATH statement and any required SET values and programs to initialise your sound card. That's it. No more. Zilcho.

If the game is a CD game you add your CD drivers to your CONFIG.SYS and your required MSCDEX statement to your AUTOEXEC.BAT. Don't add anything else. Network game? Load the drivers at the prompt after booting. Lastly, you might want to create multiple DOOM boots. One without CD, one with and so on. This, under normal circumstances, should provide you with a DOS boot that has enough memory, and speed, for any DOS game you intend to run.

View it right!

Don't like the way Windows 95 displays folders and files? Fix it thus: Select View -> Toolbar then View -> Details. Next select View -> Options and tick 'Browser folders using a single window...' Select the View tab and click 'Show all files', 'Display the full MS-DOS path...' and make sure 'Hide MS-DOS file extensions...' is unclicked. Now your folders will display files in an easier to read, follow and informative manner.

THE ORACLE
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WELCOME GAMERS TO THIS MONTH'S ORACLE, ONE WORD OF NOTE HOWEVER. IT'S A LUCASARTS FREE MONTH. THAT'S RIGHT, NOT ONE SOLVE TO ONE LUCASARTS GAME WILL BE ISSUED THIS MONTH. THIS STATEMENT ISSUED IN THE INTERESTS OF ORACLE SANITY.

Leisure Suit Larry 7

? I am having trouble in LL7 I am stuck and I can't win craps. How can you help me. I have 267 points. Oh, and also what do I need to do to use the phone to call 1134? Please may the enlightened one shed some light to my noble cause?

Mark Pinkerton and Scott Smith

***** Leisure Suit Larry 7, a noble cause. Uh huh.

Anyway, here's the answers you require.

Firstly, to all you Larry 7 players out there, try turning on "Closed Captioning" by choosing the "Game" menu from the top pull-down menus, and selecting the bottom option, "Closed Captioning", or by pressing Ctrl-T. Typed sentences may contain clues by capitalising key words, but you don't hear any emphasis on the word when the narrator says it.

The Craps Tournament

Well, it looks like you can't even lose at craps, because the table is too full. Go back to the dining room, eat some bean dip, and come back to the casino. Then, go ahead and fart. Sure, it's socially unacceptable, but now the craps table is empty! Talk to the "Croupier", and get a feel for his attitude. Then, go ahead, and play. You'll lose of course. Use the souvenir dice with the glue. Nuts! Looks like Jacques won't let you use those dice. Use the souvenir dice with the toilet paper, to get the new, improved completely illegal, but Jacques doesn't know, dice. Now that you have your shaved dice, nothing can stop you.

Bet again, and once Jacques gives you the casino dice, use your shaved dice on the table instead. Once you start winning,

a woman named Dewmi Moore takes notice of you, and offers you a game of Strip Liar's Dice.

Tomb Raider

? On the last level of Tomb Raider, when you shoot the scions from that spinning claw thing, what do you do next? I've killed that weird monster that hatches and got back up to the scions, but I'm just stuck from there. Tell me what to do next.

Joseph Barry Moore

***** Tomb Raider, now there's one damn good game! Bet 'ya Lara is hanging for 3D accelerators that can do spheres. Then, the next time she hugs someone, she won't skewer them. After killing the Alien, Find and pick-up all 6 Uzi clips from the corners of the room below then enter and slide down the red tunnel. Push the block 3 times then go up the ramp and push the next block once then climb to the tunnel above. Save the game then dash through the veg-o-matic and don't fall through the fake floor. Go right at the intersection until you reach a block which you push forward. Return to the intersection and turn right going past the door and drop into a room with a block. Pull the block then climb up to the tunnel and go left and back down and push the block forward then go back to the red door. Get on the block, use the switch then turn and enter the next room and go right and jump to the ledge on the slope. Jump to the next ledge and a third jump to the long ledge that crosses the entire slope. A bridge appears behind you so jump back and cross the bridge to find SECRET #1 - medkit, shells, and magnum clips. Use the switch 2 times - down then back up to secure a portion of the bridge then return to the ledges and go left to the tunnel entrance. Proceed up the tunnel and reverse when the boulder comes at you. Avoid the boulder then go back up the tunnel to repeat this with a second boulder. At the end of the tunnel is a collapsible ledge which you need to roll onto then run off before you fall. Hang and drop down taking severe damage then recharge your health. That's it, I'll give you the satisfaction of finishing this great game yourself.

Laura Bow 2: The Dagger of Amon Ra

? Can you help me, I am stuck in Act 5 of Laura Bow 2: The Dagger of Amon Ra. When the guy is chasing me to kill me, I don't know how to escape the murderer. Please help me.

Chris Midgley
Narrabundah, ACT

***** Excellent choice of game there Chris, right out of Sierra's classic days, the answers you need are as follows. Move fast and look sharp. Head right into the pterodactyl room. Shut the doors and use the wire on them to keep them closed. This is only a delaying tactic, but it will buy you some time to get further away.

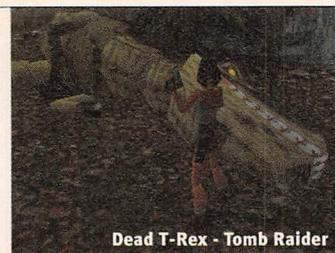
Run into the armour room and north to the locked door. This time, you see a chair. Your first thought may be to climb through the transom. Nice idea, but that's not quite the thing, instead, push the chair to the door. Open the transom, then get down and continue on to the Egyptian Room. Hide in the left-most mummy case. This fakes out Mr. X, all right, and he batters down the locked door. As soon as you're out of the case again, run to that door and go through into the old storage room. Move the crate on the right wall to reveal a secret elevator. Take this down to the mummy storage room. The elevator goes up again as soon as you leave it (no way to prevent that). Shut the door to the room. Get the mummy from the case on the floor, and prop it against the door. Use your snake catcher on the mummy case on the left wall, the one with the snake emblem near the top. This opens a passage into the secret room of the Amon Ra cult.

Fade to Black

? I am having trouble with Fade to Black on Level 5. I have given the bird to the Oracle (Why thank you.) and received the code. What do I do now though?

Marcus Clements
Croydon, Vic

***** Your solution is as follows Marcus. After receiving the code return to the hall with 2 Golems and search the second locker for a crystal. Be careful, at the same time the Golem behind you will come alive and the wall gun will start to shoot paralyzing shots. After you take the crystal approach the wall panel



Dead T-Rex - Tomb Raider

on the left side of the hall - it's the exact copy of the pyramid code. Look at the code in your inventory and place the buttons under the icons in the same position (ie, push the first and last buttons). Now enter the second door (right) in this hall (be quick, the paralyzing gun will shoot at you and the another one Golem will come!). Use teleporter. In dark hall run ahead, avoid paralyzing shots and keep left. Here be aware of two more Golems - they are brown this time, and a little harder. Run around the hall to fool the Golems and win some time, then run ahead, to the corridor on the left side, open the door. Here is the final part of this level. In this hall you must place all the crystals you have to their slots according to the code. One crystal is already at the place, use it for orientation. Do it fast, because the Golems are coming. When you do everything right the pyramid will appear just ahead of you.

Discworld 2

? Could you please help me. I'm losing sleep playing Discworld 2. How do you get blood out of the Mousie? What do you put in the boots to catch the disgusting smell? How do you get the Genie?

John Caboolture
Qld

***** Ok John, Mouse blood. Go to the cemetery. Get the pick. Go into the crypt, use the ladder on the coffin, climb the ladder, and get the false teeth. Use the false teeth on the mouse. Use the test tube on the fangs. Disgusting smell. Go to the beggars, and use the imp boots on the bottle. Use the bottle on Foul Ole Ron's smell.

Genie.

Talk to Mrs Cake. Use the sarcastic icon. Use the sarcastic icon, then the question mark icon, then the thought icon, then the smile icon. Ask her about the genie bottle, and ectoplasm.

Tomb Raider

? Tomb Raider is definitely the best game I own and I say this after playing only the first three levels only. The problem I'm

having though is that I can't find the third cog on the third level. I've found the one in the pool in the temple, and one after jumping across the collapsed bridge. Please point me in the direction of the third cog.

Devon Roberts
Broken Hill, NSW

***** Greetings Devon, your help for the excellent Tomb Raider is at hand, what about that T-Rex ay' Ok, the third cog is actually very close to the point where the T-Rex dies near the broken bridge. Look for a door in the grass covered rock, enter the passage and kill the raptor waiting down the hall. Advance until you reach a waterfall. Climb the ledges to the right and get the Cog.

Kings Quest 5

? I've recently purchased Kings Quest 5 and already I've found myself stuck. I've reached the witch (who has the willows heart) and have used the pendant to stop her powers but cannot mover her from in front of the bridge to her house. Please help me.
Phillip Jackson
Padstow, NSW

***** Here's what you need to do Phillip.
At the temple Knock on the door with the STAFF Inside temple. Take the BRASS BOTTLE. Take the GOLD COIN (Be quick!). Leave the temple and walk 1 south. Temple oasis. "Take" water Walk 8 east.
SERENIA:
Gypsies Give GOLD COIN to the man (Movie time - you'll get an AMULET). Walk 1 east to the Weeping tree. Talk to tree. Walk 1 east and 1 north.
Forest path.
Wear AMULET. Walk 1 west, 1 east and 1 north. (Note you can't leave the forest where you arrived) to the Witch's house. Talk to witch Give BRASS BOTTLE to the witch. Enter the house.
Inside the witch's house.
"Take" the trunk and the SPINNING WHEEL. "Take" the drawer and the POUCH. Open the POUCH (You discover 3 EMERALDS). Take the KEY from the lamp. Leave the house and walk 1 east.

Angel Devoid, Alone in the Dark

? Oh great and marvellous Oracle, please have mercy on a lowly game freak in need of assistance. I am stuck in four of the games I am currently playing.

Could the Almighty Oracle please find time in his crucial gaming schedule to help me, an insignificant gamer on the long and treacherous trail to gameplay paradise.

Angel Devoid: the last thing I did was to get the Wet Ware, I've also found Mr Digits but he keeps telling me to come back later. What do I do?

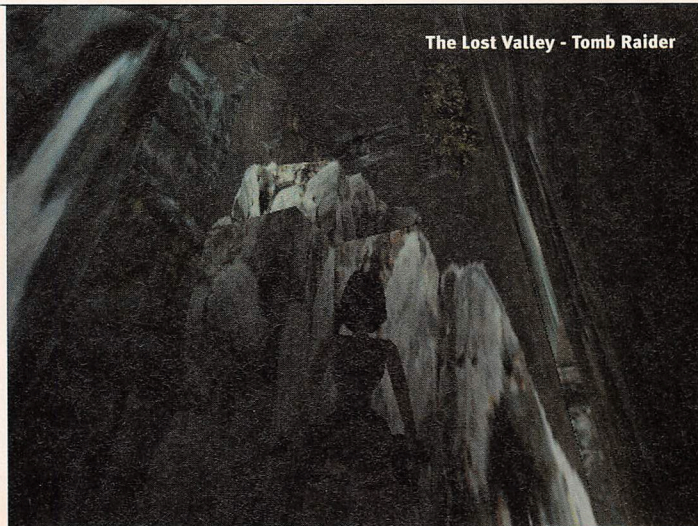
Alone in the Dark: There's a laughing pirate with one leg, a wormy thing in the cellar and the people in the ballroom won't dance. I've got the record but they don't like the song.
Alone in the Dark 2: I've got the rope and the hook, but I can't seem to use it at all. I also can't get past these wavy plant arm things in the maze.

Thank you o great and wise Oracle for your time and patience, BUT wait, that was too easy. Surely a great demi-God such as yourself wouldn't break a sweat over a few bonus questions?
Mech Warrior 2: How do I finish Bouk Obelis.

Any strategies for *Warcraft 2* I keep getting beaten in Multiplayer? There, that's all. That lot should keep even the great Oracle on his toes. But I reckon you probably won't even print my letter or answer my questions. Three years of subscriptions says you won't publish this.

Joe Freak
Mount Warren Park, QLD

***** Firstly Joe, That's a classy letter with gratuitous Oracle praise, the way I like it. As the Oracle that cares, of course your letter will get answered, unlike those *other* subscriptions. Besides, you asked good questions, not a LucasArts problem in sight.
Angel Devoid.
CASINO
Go right to enter Casino. Go left to Virtual Reality trip for fun. Go forward to Trix table. Examine table using magnifying glass "look" option. Click on table to learn rules of Trix. Insert PEDI card (Selina gave it to you) into card slot. Maximize bet for fun. Roll 4 times. Mr Digit will then interrupt you and give you his card address.
ALLEY
Go right. Go right. Shoot brute in alley. Pick up card he dropped.
SUBWAY
Go to the Neo City Transit. Go through door. Insert Subway Card (from brute in alley) into card slot. Wait for Subway (Do not go onto tracks). (Change to CD 2) Go right, Go left
DEATH 7 BAR
Go right to enter bar. After getting drinks, pick "Normal" mood choice when talking with Jett. Jett



The Lost Valley - Tomb Raider

will then hand you a grenade to disarm in 5 seconds. The possible combination is one of the following. The game randomizes this so you should save before entering the bar. You'll be able to do about 3-4 of these before you die.

1, 2, 3/3, 2,1/2, 1, 3

1, 3, 2/3, 1, 2/2, 3, 1

After you have disarmed the grenade, Jett gives you a skeleton key card. Leave bar. Go forward.

Go forward.

UNDERGROUND

Go forward then down sewer.

Click on the flashlight. Go backwards (to the right)

Go left toward grate. The Cyberdogs will appear. Use gun to kill them. Go left. Go forward. Go forward. Push this code into the keypad "6974947" (from bathroom wall) then insert skeleton keycard into keyslot. Go right. When woman interrupts you, select "Angelic" mood choice. Click on TV for fun (twice). Go backwards Get black box from inside refrigerator. Go backwards.

Go right.

Go forward. Go up ladder. Go left to the CYBERCHURCH.

Go left. Go right to follow Reverend Gold. Go backwards, which will exit church.

Go left. Go forward.

Go right to Mr. Digit's shop. Go forward to enter shop. Give Mr. Digit all three chips from the black box inside the refrigerator. Also give him the "chip address" card from the truck. Go right to exit Alone in the Dark

In the LIVING ROOM: Use the Sword (from the Knight) to kill the Pirate (Captain Norton). Take the key he had and the book by the paintings on the floor. Read and leave the Book (Demonia Particularis). Use the golden key from the Pirate to open the locked set of double doors and enter the

DANCE HALL. Leave the Key to the Dance Hall.

In the DANCE HALL: Ignore the Record (J. Strauss's Blue Danube) on the stand to the Right. Use the Record (Saint-Saens' Dance of Death). Avoiding the dancers, take the Key from the Mantle. Leave the Record and the Gramophone. Exit back through the doors you came in and go back to the Third HALLWAY.

Alone in the Dark 2

You don't use the hook and the rope until the absolute very end! As for the wavy plant thing (!) Shoot the fat 12-gauge wielding gangster and proceed. (not turning will get you back near the crossroad, Cut the weaving branches with your saber and SAVE! See that little brown spot behind the trees? That's Shorty Leg and he's quite tough to kill. Best way to kill him is to hide behind the statue and use everything you've got, especially the revolver. Don't worry about spending all your ammo. Just kill him. Take the vial and use the grapple. Use the grapple again to make the statue's arm move and enter.

Mech Warrior 2

For the last Wolf Mission, which truly is extremely Hard so take Star Mates, all should be either Dire Wolf's of Warhawk's. You will have to fight 2 huge Warhawks at the beginning of the mission. Once you have destroyed them move north to the blockade and destroy it completely. After that a third Warhawk will attack you so send your Star Mates after him. You need to inspect the Complex right but you can't because of the shield. There is a square depression in the ground West and slightly north of the complex. Blow it up and the

Shields go down. Next you will encounter some medium sized Mechs. If you still have ammunition and are in OK condition then they won't be so bad. Inspect the Complex then Blow it up and the mission will be all done.

Warcraft 2

Remember, you asked. In Warcraft 2, the easiest way to beat an opponent is with a Grunt Rush. Banned from all Warcraft 2 competitions, it is a frustrating and totally lame way to win. It does however work extremely well. Here's how you do it, Build a hall, three farms, and a barracks. As you do so, produce six peons or peasants. Start the barracks as soon as the first farm is done. Set five peons or peasants to mine gold, and put the sixth to chopping wood. Use the gold to produce seven grunts or footmen. As you produce them, scout for the enemy. When you have all seven, gather them outside the enemy town, then attack to kill all the enemy peasants or peons. If this doesn't work, you will eventually have enough wood to build another farm, produce more choppers, and proceed as usual.

Screamer 2

? I'm stuck in Screamer 2, how do you get the Secret cars? Also, I heard that you can be a large eating Dinosaur in Monster Truck Madness! How do you do it?

Peter Segar

Pearcedale Victoria

* Munch away Peter, Screamer 2

In the main section (where you select Arcade, Options, etc.) MRTK = Access to all tracks CHMPA = Access to all championship types

To access all the hidden cars type:

TACAR

TBCAR

TCCAR

TDCAR

There's one car for each team.

Monster Truck Madness

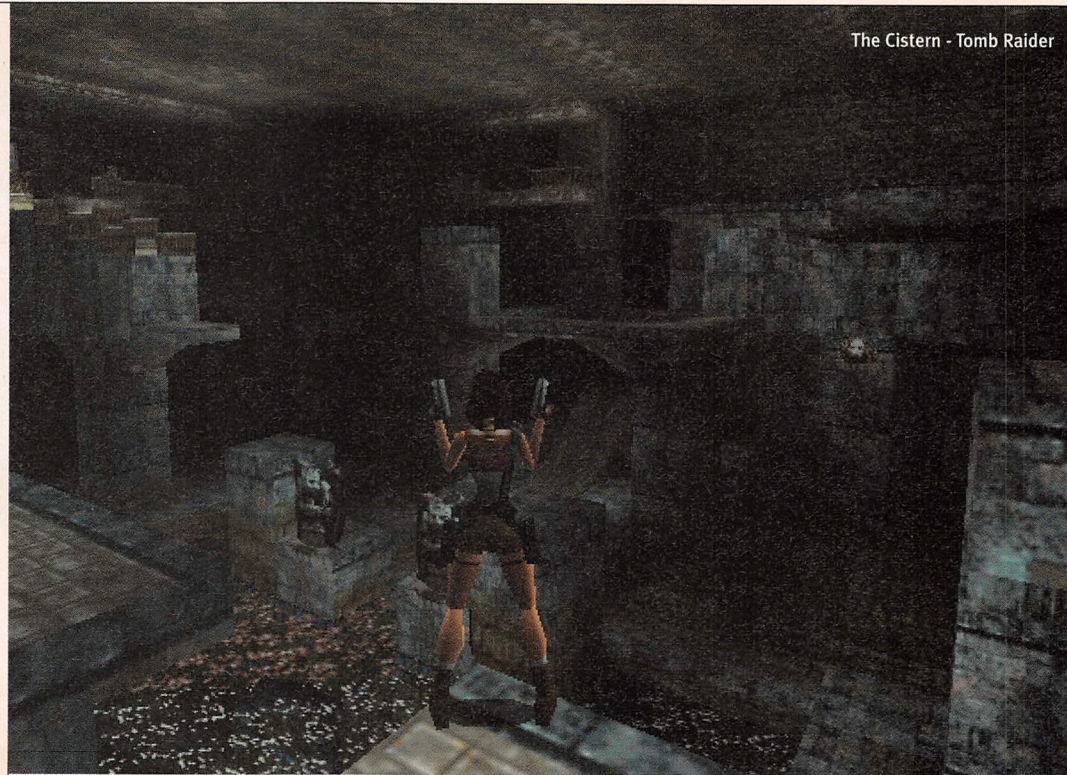
In Microsoft Monster Truck Madness, type in "trex" while racing to drive a large dinosaur like vehicle eating a sports car. Press Ctrl and 3 to get a cool chase view.

Spycraft

? In Spycraft, how do you get past the part where you have to identify who stole the weapon used in the assassination. Please help me!

Steven Smith

Greensborough, Vic.



The Cistern - Tomb Raider

* Well Steven, here's more than enough help in Spycraft to get you to Moscow. Access PinPoint software. You have to find the weapon used, it's absolutely silent and leaves no bullet. Browse thru the weapon database and you'll see that the weapon was PEG (Pulse Electric Gun) and the bullet is needle pack projectile. Report it, watch the message incoming. Go to Washington → Langley → DCI Sterling. Then return to your office computer and click Security Model. Look at the dr. Cohlens activities. Browse his dossier (folder icon next to his name) to find out that he's claustrophobic and never uses elevators. Then look at his activities again and click on 24 - this day he used the elevator. Activate Mix & Match. Build the sketch - here's the man you look for (Allen Wayne). Report your progress. Read the new message. Open dr. Cohlens security model again. Click on his phone activities for 2 and 22. On the recording isolate the woman's voice and analyse it. You'll find out it's Ying Chungwang, another CIA ex - look at her dossier, then report her name and location (Rockland, Washington D.C.). Read the incoming mail. Visit secret meeting in Washington → Halifax. Return to your office. Read the incoming mail, get all the stuff from the desk into your case. Use your PC and click on Cypher. Click on Beale → A-B →

Beowulf. Report (Ying in Moscow). Click on PhotoDoc. You must falsificate a photo of Grendel in prison. You know he's in Turkey (see Ying's crypted note), he smokes Emperor Filterless (see his dossier) and you have his photo. Drag the low-left Grendel-face and place it on the face of man on the photo, drag the middle turkish paper and place it on left and middle Camel pack on the right. Match everything with actual human size and hit Print. Read the incoming messages to see if you've succeeded, if not start all over. Read all the messages you receive.

Lands of Lore

? I'm playing Lands of Lore and I'm stuffed as to what to do next. I've been through the swamps and the Urbish mines, filled one vial with hornet honey, the other with swamp water, what now?

Kev,

Richmond, Tas.

* Well Kev, you obviously need to move on at maximum warp, I'll give you some more clues, all you need do is issue the order, Engage. From the Hornets honey, another ingredient of the elixir. Get the The crossbow 'Valkyrie', a great weapon. Don't lose it! If you are collecting too many weapons, go to, the Gorkha Swamp entrance, sell your excess arms to the fletcher in the Gorkha Swamp. Return to Upper Opinwood. Find the chest with the lock picks.

The emerald blade is good for killing wraiths.

Now go back to where Scotia has put her barrier to keep you out of her way. Use the Vaelan's cube on the barrier a couple of times.

YVEL WOODS

Go to the North East corner. Here you will see that the Orc's have demolished the bridge to Castle Cimmeria. Somewhere near is an orc you should kill as he has another Vaelan's cube. Use the Vaelan's cube on the barrier at the SW of the map. After the barrier, go east, then north and open the chest with the lock picks. Now go to the entrance to Yvel City.

YVEL CITY

Enter Yvel City. Go North, East, North, East, South, West, North to enter the house and pick up the Ace of Dominion. Then go East, North, West, North, 3rd East and you will meet Victor again. Sell him any excess equipment and buy the great sword. The sword is an excellent weapon. Now go West, South, 3rd East, South, East, North, 2nd East and pry the boards off the door. Enter the house. Pick up the speckled key and the hand of fate spell scroll. North, West, North, East and take the Dwarvish plate mail. Next go West, North, East, North. This is Sadie's shop. Show her the riddle scroll and she will give you the last ingredient for the elixir. Outside, you can drop the riddle scroll.

CODE

GOBLINS

Level Codes

Level 2 = **VQVQFDE**
 Level 3 = **ICIGCAA**
 Level 4 = **ECQPQCC**
 Level 5 = **FTWKFFEN**
 Level 6 = **HQWFTFW**
 Level 7 = **DWNDGBW**
 Level 8 = **JCJCJHM**
 Level 9 = **ICVGCCT**
 Level 10 = **LQPCUJV**
 Level 11 = **HNWVGKB**
 Level 12 = **FTQKVLE**
 Level 13 = **DCPLQMH**
 Level 14 = **EDWGPNI**
 Level 15 = **TCNGTOV**
 Level 16 = **TCVQRPN**
 Level 17 = **IQDNKQO**
 Level 18 = **KKKPURE**
 Level 19 = **NGOGKSP**
 Level 20 = **NNGWTTT**
 Level 21 = **LGWFGUS**
 Level 22 = **TQNGFVC**

DEUS

Follow these steps to activate the Cheat Mode in Deus:

1. Go to the main option panel.
2. Position the mouse pointer onto the top left of the screen.
3. Press the Alt, Ctrl and C keys at the same time. The animation of the mouse pointer should stop at this point.
4. Use the numeric keypad to type in 3615, then hit Enter (also on the numeric keypad). While you are typing, you should see the numbers appearing on the top left of your screen. After you hit Enter, the animation of the mouse pointer should resume. You are now in Cheat Mode. Now, once you are in Cheat Mode, go to the normal, 3D game view. From here, you can press Ctrl-T to edit the weapons and set all of your parameters to their respective maximums. This also gives you all of the objects of the scenario, although they will still appear in their normal locations - you will be carrying exact copies.

Important Note: don't press Ctrl-T while in one of the 2D panels or while you are swimming.

NHL 97

[SHIFT] **WAGD** = Enable cheats

H = Home team scores goal
V = Visiting team scores goal
P = Ends period
G = Ends game
O = Goes to overtime
I = Causes an injury
F = Causes a fight
T = Shrinks players each time you hit

it (shows when play stops)

[SHIFT] **T** = Makes players larger each time you hit it (shows when play stops)

1 = Two minute penalty is called
2 = Four minute penalty is called
4 = Five minute penalty is called
5 = Penalty shot

THE ELDER SCROLLS: DAGGERFALL

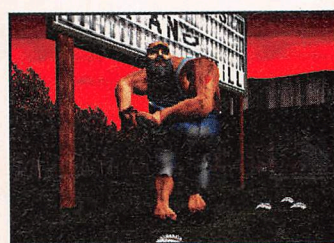
If you edit the *biogXXto.txt* files you can change the stats that your character starts with. Either use Windows Notepad or the Dos editor.

The XX is a number from 00 to 17 that corresponds to a character class listed here.

00 = mage
01 = spellsword
02 = battlemage
03 = sorcerer
04 = healer
05 = nightblade
06 = bard
07 = burglar
08 = rogue
09 = acrobat
10 = thief
11 = assassin
12 = monk
13 = archer
14 = ranger
15 = barbarian
16 = warrior
17 = knight

M.A.X.

Type these codes in whilst playing.
MAXAMMO = Full load of ammo.
MAXSURVEY = Reveals where all resources are located.
MAXSP = Reveals where all enemies are located.
MAXSUPER = Allows chosen unit to be upgraded to the level 30.
MAXSTORAGE = Fills raw materials units' cargo completely.



REDNECK RAMPAGE DEMO

RDELVIS = Elvis Mode - Invincibility toggle
RDALL = Take It All - Gives you all health, items, ammo and weapons
RDCLIP = No clipping mode
RDRATE = Display frame rate



CRICKET 97

Pause the game by pressing the space bar, then type:

starwa - to activate cheat mode.

The message 'Warp Speed Captain' will appear and all the bowling and run making by the batsmen will be at 'warp speed'.

sari - to activate Low Gravity for weird bowling effects.

FALCON 3.0

Enter cheat mode by pressing "P", followed by "TAB" anytime during flight. Resume with "P".

Page Up = Increase Altitude

+ = Increase Movement Factor

Page Down = Decrease Altitude

- = Decrease Movement Factor

F3 = Rotate Right

D = Debug Mode and displays frame rate

F4 = Rotate Left coordinates

Shift F3 = Rotate Up

Shift F4 = Rotate Down

T = Enter Coordinates to Transport to (*,*)

Ctrl + = Rotation Keys above to fine tune rotation

Shift T = Change Time Day

PRIVATEER 2: THE DARKENING

NO TALENT = invincible!!!

NAPALM = a whole bunch of nukes!

REP ME UP = complete repair

CHILL OUT = gun cool off

PETY PETY = afterburner refill!

SYNDICATE WARS

Add the /m switch to the PLAY.BAT file so it will read

@main /w /g /m

Now when you play the game just hit the "." key when you're equipping your agents to add 10,000 credits to your account. You can hit it as many times as you want.

Another:

Log on as pooslice

listen for sound effect

delete pooslice and type in name you

want to be

. = 10,000

o = New weapon

U = In R&D screen and another day passes for easy research.

In a battle

alt c = Complete the level

alt t = Teleport selected agent to where your cursor is.

Shift q = bring agents back from dead, with all weapons.

DEATHDROME

Enter each code to skip to that level:

2REVOLT = The Abyss

3ACCUSED = The Outpost

SHORT4TIME = Citadel

5GETAWAYS = The Inferno

BOLT6DOWN = The Wall

ARREST7 = The Spike

LASTMEAL8 = Purgatory

METAL MARINES LEVEL CODES

Level 1 = **PNTM**

Level 2 = **HBBT**

Level 3 = **PCRC**

Level 4 = **NWTN**

Level 5 = **LSMD**

Level 6 = **CLST**

Level 7 = **JPTR**

Level 8 = **NBLR**

Level 9 = **PRSC**

Level 10 = **PHTN**

Level 11 = **TRNS**

Level 12 = **RNSN**

Level 13 = **ZDCP**

Level 14 = **FKDV**

Level 15 = **YSHM**

This month in Web Stalk, we're going to climb a little higher and examine a different side of the Net. The reality is that the Web we all love is actually a rather stagnant part of the Net as a whole.

The Web is as dynamic as someone who plans their ideas - then formats them, adds a few graphics and publishes it to a site. It's as dynamic as the morning newspaper. Embark therefore to a mostly uncontrolled medium, that of Usenet, or Newsgroups for the unwashed.

Usenet is a truly amazing side of the Net. Forget that 15 minutes of fame rubbish that studios with antiquated ideas try and promote. At any time, Usenet could have upwards of a million people lurking, posting, reading, flaming and informing. The best part however, is that it's free to everyone. Just imagine millions of people reading your ideas and comments. Now that's revolutionary.

Instant game info fix

But we're not here to be revolutionary, we're gamers and we need to have our regular fix of the latest, greatest news. Like everything though, there's rules, and on the Net, with devices such as mail bombs, capital punishment is the sentence regularly dished for those that disobey. Fear not, for we're going to lead you through and expose all the tips and tricks to surviving the Usenet experience.

Lurking - Usenet, the safe way

The first and most important thing to do with any new situation is to observe, get a feel for the new arena and take it all in. This is the essence of lurking. Specifically, it's the process of reading the messages within the newsgroup(s) and not

posting anything. This is an excellent way to become familiar with the discussion, the prime posters and the overall point of the topic. This is also how we suggest you conduct yourself for at least the first few hours or 500 messages.

Flame Wars

If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen.

Quite often you're bound to stumble into the midst of a hornets nest. Take the Battle Cruiser 3000 AD conversation in **comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.strategic** for example. When people in the real world, standing face to face have a disagreement about a particular topic, generally a fairly civilised debate over the ideas will ensue. Voices may be raised but that's about as far as it gets.

The Internet however is a whole different matter. Separated by vast distances around the world and tucked safely behind a keyboard, people leave their shells and become more aggressive and far ruder than in face to face conversations.

Flame wars are generally hated by the majority of posters (sans the Battle Cruiser conversation that is) and avoiding flame wars are the order of the day. Read a few messages ahead to see if the instigator has already been chastised by someone else or issued a warning. Only flame back in totally necessity and if it is in the spirit of that particular group.

A flame disguised in an entertaining witty, fun message however, is not always tagged a flame and may even score you a few points from the other readers. Offend too many people however and you're likely to be mail bombed (the process of having numerous and large email messages sent to your ISP. These delights are designed to annoy the ISP and cost you hours in download time receiving them. If this happens too many times, you may find your ISP kicking you off). To be safe, it's always best to take flames to private email.

How to get onto Usenet

All this talk about newsgroups is fine, if you know how to get there. The Internet is rather like an entire city. Thousands of roads and routes and ways to get places.

Usenet, for example, is like a train line with each newsgroup a stop. The Web on the other hand is more like a highway system with twists and turns and roads leading hither and thither. Sticking with this analogy, you need a ticket for the train and a car for the road, well, what if your car could drive on the road, and on the tracks? Then you would only need one car, which is exactly what Netscape offers, and why we're going to tell you how to read Usenet using it.

Note: You need only do this setup once.

So, load up your copy of Netscape (version 2 and above) and click the following menu options.

- Options -----> Mail and News Preferences
- Click on the "Servers" tab.
- In the News section, a field is marked News (nntp) server. Click the field and enter in your ISPs' news server.

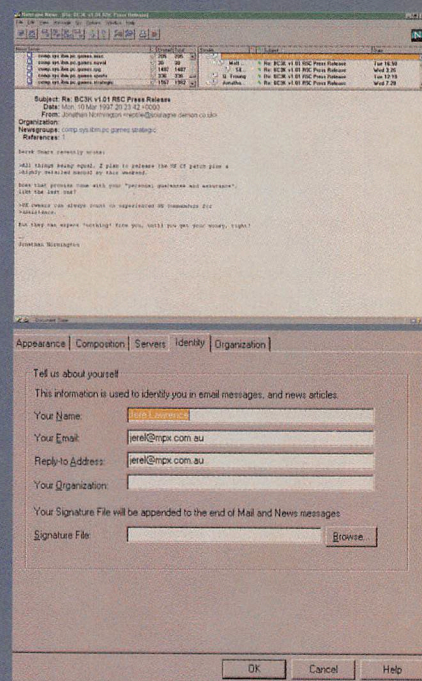
Note: If you don't know your ISPs' news server, check the documentation you received when you signed up, otherwise it's time for a call to their helpdesk in order to find out.

- In the get field - change the number to 3500.
- Click on the identity tab.
- Enter in your name, email address and Reply To address (normally the same as your email address).
- Click Ok.
- Click Window -----> Netscape News.
- The Netscape News reader window will appear.
- In the left hand frame, you will see the news server you entered in before, click the + to its left.
- Click Options -----> Show All Newsgroups.

- If Netscape asks you to receive the current list of Newsgroups, answer yes.
- Wait for the Newsgroups to come through (could take 10 minutes).
- Now you will have anywhere from 3,000 - 26,000 different news topics to choose from. With such a foreboding figure to deal with, here are some newsgroups that we suggest.

- To add these groups, click File -----> Add Newsgroup then type in
- comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.action
- comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.adventure
- comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.announce
- comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.flight-sim
- comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.naval
- comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.rpg
- comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.sports
- comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.strategic
- comp.sys.ibm.pc.hardware.video

Now, make sure there is a tick in the box to the right of each entry. When that's done, Click Options -----> Show Subscribed Newsgroups



Set up your personal details correctly, so your witty postings will be recognized world-wide.

net

Posting

As we discussed earlier, the beauty of Usenet is that you can have your say. The first thing to remember is whom you're talking to. If a particular topic of conversation within a newsgroup (known as a thread) interests you, use the reply function of the news program to contribute to that thread.

Giving a post a new subject name that takes it away from the general course of the conversation will not only probably cause your message to be ignored, but may generate some negative feedback from other readers.

Cross posting, Trolling

One of the more powerful abilities of Usenet is the ability to post one message to a vast number of newsgroups, known as cross posting. If you were a developer trying to tell your audience of game players about your great new game, cross posting to say **comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.strategic** and **alt.games** would be a wise decision. Cross posting simply because you wanted more exposure however will ruffle some feathers.

Trolling, which is often a part of cross posting is deliberately sending a message designed to bait other readers into starting a flame war. Often caused by more mischievous Usenet pranksters, an example of a Troll may be posting a message to **comp.sys.os.windows95** saying how much the person loves Windows 95, but hates OS/2 and then cross posting to **comp.sys.os.os2**.

Trolling is highly immature behaviour, but if done correctly can be pretty damn funny. Here at PowerPlay, we of course do not promote Trolling in any way at all. Unless you've got a really funny one that is, but remember, if it all goes wrong...

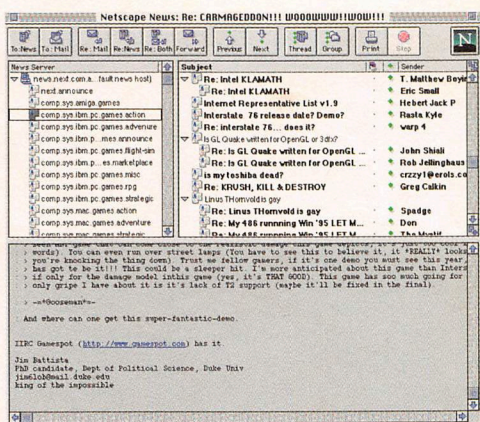
Pyramid Selling schemes and Make money fast

The true blemish and blight on Usenet would have to be this modern chain letter scam. Numerous people

believing that sending messages asking people to add themselves to a list, then sending the other members on the list \$1 is as stupid as it is annoying.

Never, ever post one of these messages yourself.

Pyramid selling schemes are in less abundance but still detract from the topic of the Newsgroup. These come in the form of offers to sell books or buy groceries. Participating is your decision, just carry out the discussions in private email and DON'T post messages regarding it on Usenet. Besides, most people who involve themselves in these systems are often belittled by the rest of the human race.



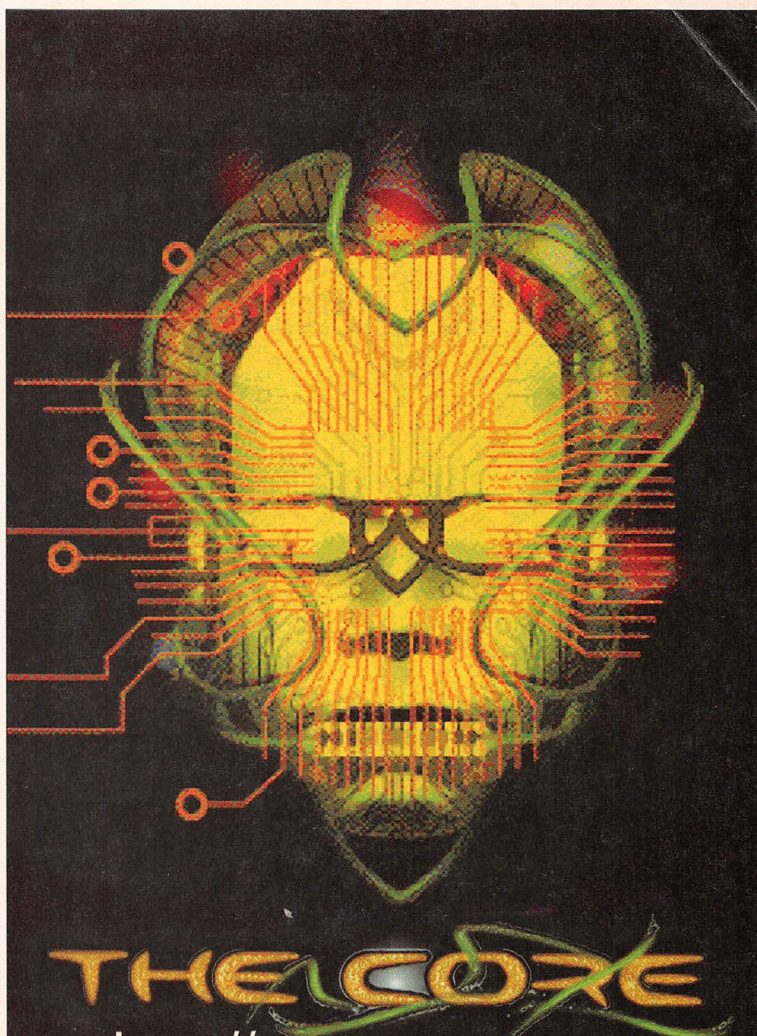
Netscape's newsreader. Top left are the subscribed groups, right are the selected group's postings and below is a selected post. Logical eh?

Overall, your Usenet experience is going to be highly pleasurable, in particular, look out for big names as well. Such as these regular posters. Andy Hollis (of EA's Simulator dept.) Buzz Hoffman (Thrustmaster), Dave Thielen (Writer of Enemy Nations), Virtual Ted (WestWood Studios) and many others, including Gillian Anderson in the X-Files groups.

Finally, and in all seriousness, don't allow Usenet posts to dominate your every thought. While posts can be informative and from the "man on the street". Unlike magazines, no one is accountable for what they say. That post about the greatest game to hit the shelf, the last game you ever desire, could be from an individual far worse than any of the trouble makers we've touched on.

They may be the scourge of the earth, someone from ...Marketing.

Jere Lawrence



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LETTERS

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He just likes us...

Hi, my name is David Wilson and I'm only new in this PC World, but I must admit after reading your issue 1 in May, which had previews of the game F1 GP2 I thought "wow" I must hit the bank and buy a computer and get this game, and I haven't looked back since.

Not to mention all the advice in the setup page in your mag, thanks a lot you have really helped me out. Also for the people out there you should at least tell them or reprint your excellent review on the 10 3D cards in issue 8, it was great.

Thanks again,
Your friendly reader

D Wilson

Quake vs. Red Alert

I'm not the kind of person who sucks up to magazines just to be goody 2 shoes, but I must congratulate you on an excellent magazine. Your magazine is way better than those really crappy pommy games magazines because you have good reviews of games, an excellent cheat section and you review computer products like graphic accelerator cards or modems which can be good for first time buyers. Anyway, I can't understand why everyone is raving about Quake? I think it is the most crappy game. The graphics are really, really shit! (excuse my language). But I can't see why people would want to play it. I personally put my money on games like: Command and Conquer, Red Alert, Warcraft 2 or Crusader: No Remorse which are really cool games. I'd just like to say that if you keep up the standard of the magazine it will become the pinnacle of all gaming mags.

I'd just like to ask when Tiberium Sun, the 3rd in the Command and Conquer series is going to be released in Australia? Some of my friends say halfway through '97 and others say the beginning of 98.

Pieter Gorter
Brisbane, QLD.

Tiberium Sun is due "4th Quarter 97", according to Westwood Studios. You don't have to like Quake, but if you're going to knock the most popular game on the planet you'll have to do a bit better than "really, really shit". It's traditional among intelligent people to say WHY they dislike something, otherwise you end up sounding like an ignorant attention seeker...

Thanks for the Hex

Firstly, thanks for putting the Hex Workshop on last months coverdisk (issue 10) I can now say I have a decent Hex editor which I know how to use. Speaking of Hex editing now that you've tapped in on it with last months special, could you keep it up with it? E.G more Hex cheats in code? (Hint, hint!!!).

Secondly, congrats to all the guys that do the reviews, not only are they in depth, but the ratings given are also usually spot on! How come a game reviewed so poor (yeah that's you Alien Trilogy & Daytona) found a spot on your demo disc? What's the go with that? Acclaim, I could sh't better graphics than those used in Alien Trilogy, that was one the saddest attempts at console to PC conversion I have ever seen, hang your heads in shame!

Thirdly, could you see about putting Quake, Duke, C&C, etc, etc, etc levels &/or patches on your cover disc, as some poverty people (all fingers pointing at me!) a) can't afford to subscribe to an internet service provider, b) can't afford a decent modem and c) are proud owners (shyeah right!) of Pensioners PCs incapable of making net surfing enjoyable.

Finally, two thumbs up to all those who have hands in on creating such an awesome mag, the only PC to buy in my opinion. In reply to Nathan Lockett (issue 10), yes, it is better than all the "British Crap" and it's also better than all the U.S crap (PC Gamer: 200 pages; 170 pages of ads, 30 pages of material!!) and its cheaper too!

Tim Ross

P.S Why was the Milo symbol on the front of the last disc?

Useful fun stuff like new game levels have already made it onto past PowerPlay CDs, and will continue to do so until the end of time.

Milo sponsored that issue's CD, that's why. Drink Milo, it's good.

Confused in 3D

After reading your Issue No. 10, which I must say was very informative, I purchased a Diamond Monster 3D Card.

The card installed with no problems as did the software. However, I have been unable to get Sega Rally to recognise that the card is there.

The instructions that came with the Monster 3D state "Games that use the Direct 3D or have been accelerat-

ed for 3Dfx will automatically recognise Monster 3D and take advantage of its awesome 3D capabilities".

At first I thought it may be because the Installation disk for the Monster 3D loaded Microsoft's Direct X 2 while Sega Rally loads DirectX 3. However, I had a friend get the updated drivers from Diamond's web site for me which included Direct X 3 but this had no effect. When I checked the DX setup file it says that 3D Hardware Acceleration is enabled.

If you have any suggestions as to how I can get Sega Rally (excellent game by the way) to run smoothly in something other than Low-Res they would be greatly appreciated.

Keep up the good work with the magazine, it is certainly one I will be looking forward to each month.

Yours faithfully

A G Vettiger

PS My system is a Pentium 133 with 32 meg of RAM and a 2m PCI Video Card and the Monster 3D.

Very important bit of information: Direct3D is the subset of DirectX that uses the 3Dfx (and other hardware accelerators), just because it's DirectX it doesn't mean your 3D accelerator will work its magic, it must, specifically, be Direct3D. New Win 95 games use DirectX, but only a few thus far use the Direct3D subset. As such, Sega Rally won't benefit from the 3Dfx as it's not a Direct3D game. However, Sega Rally DOES have a high res mode. If that's not accessible you may not have a DirectDraw (confused yet?) compliant card.

Is VR RS?

I've been a PCPP reader since Issue 1 and am now subscribing, satisfied that your mag is the best of the bunch. Your writers deserve a pat on the back for the entertainment they bring in their articles, and the production staff do a great job in presenting it. Well done to all involved.

My question regards flight sims (being all I seem to do these days!) and peripherals that are now available on the market at the moment. I run USNF '97 (which unfortunately I had never heard or read much about until I saw it on the shelf at the store) and it is a good all-round combat flight sim. Those VTOL landings on the W.A.S.P with the Harrier can get pretty hairy! Anyway, the control setup says I can use a VFX-1 Forte Helmet. I've heard these go for about a grand,

but are they worth the pricetag? Are they any good either?

Secondly, are there any rumours of add-on scenarios for this game (like they did with ATF & Apache Longbow?) and when might they be available?

Thanks for you help

Geoff Robinson.

VR headsets like the Forte VFX-1 haven't taken the world by (the much prophesised) storm, largely because high-resolution LCD screen technology hasn't reached a practical level of price vs. performance. We'll be looking at all the VR headsets on the market soon, but the technology has a way to go before it's good for anything except a stiff neck and sore eyes.

Which 3D for me?

I have a few questions for you in relation to the report you did on 3D accelerator card chipsets such as the 3DFX and the Power VR in issue 10 as I am strongly considering purchasing one.

1) Will the accelerator chipsets improve performance to games that are not written specifically for them, such as GP2 and Tomb Raider, or do they rely on specific instructions within the game programming that allows the program to utilize them.

2) Do you think that as with all other computers hardware components, the minute you walk out of the store with the new accelerator card it will be outdated, or will the software houses write games that will work on the same chipsets for a reasonable amount of time, such as with the consoles?

3) You state that the Power VR does not support Bi linear filtering. You go on to say that "This is the one must have function any 3D card can have. The effect this gives of smoothing makes an immense difference in the graphical quality of a game". Can you please explain this and why you still put the Power VR on par with the 3DFX Chipset?

I hope you can shed some light on this and I hope these cards are everything you say they are as there will be some fun times ahead.

Jay Cook

1. Pass-through and parallel processing cards such as the 3Dfx and Power VR will not help games which are not written to use them - either natively or via Open GL or Direct 3D. Stand-alone cards which use the Rendition Verite chipset offer both 3D hardware acceleration and truly impressive performance

(with the latest drivers) in non-optimised 3D games. The Rendition is easily the best GP2 card out there - and that's a non-optimised game.

2. With common standards like Open GL and Direct3D you'll be future-proofed for quite a while. Native support is another matter that will only be settled with time.

3. We didn't put it "on par" with the 3Dfx. Each has unique advantages and it took us 4 pages to explain the main differences. To summarize, the PowerVR has raw, blinding speed with stunning lighting effects but not the advanced textures which bi-linear filtering delivers - you still get big chunky pixels. The 3Dfx however has ALMOST the speed of the PowerVR AND the beautiful texture effects as well.

Play to Win

First of all, I'd like to state how much I like your mag. I do have a complaint, so please hang around. But I have found the contents in your mag to be really good on the whole, and your reviews are always clear and concise.

But what I have a problem with is the CD. I have been buying your mag since issue 4, and in seven issues I have seen it go from 90% stuff being able to run from DOS to 90% stuff only run from Win95.

But not everybody has Win 95 you know. There are, in fact, still a large number of people out there WITHOUT Windows 95. Now don't like Win 95, and so therefore I don't have it (I'm waiting for Win 97). Also, amongst all the people I know, only two people I spoke to liked Win 95, and only one of them had a computer. In fact, one of my friends who got Win 95 with his computer got pissed off with it that he sold it for \$5 (yes! \$5 dollars) and got me to put Win 3.11 on for him.

This brings me to the point of my letter - although I do like your mag, I buy it mainly for the CD and I do not like the prospect of 90% of the CD being useless to me.

I have bought a few of the British mags and, for just a few dollars more, I get a CD where I can use over 90%. They always have less Win 95 stuff on their CDs. Why can't you? Their stuff is recent, new releases and all DOS or Win 32



Here's a nice Quake screenshot. No reason for it, we just liked it.

(which I have installed).

Another thing - why don't you state when something is runnable in Windows 3.x? I went back over the PC PowerPlay CDs and found a lot that I couldn't run - Track Attack Demo, Fozzie Bear (runs on Win 32), The Rock, Dog Day etc etc. They all work on Win 3.1 and higher. Really, I think it's totally unacceptable that all the specs state Win 95 - I don't even know what I can run before I go home!

So, if you either don't start getting some more DOS programs on the CD (about 50/50 would be best), or give me a response in your next issue, then I'm going to have to stop buying your mag and get the ones from England. Sure, they may be a bit out of date when they get here, but their CDs actually have something I can use.

Yours faithfully,

Adam Wade

Guilty as charged. The PC gaming world is moving inexorably towards Win 95 dominance. Fact. Sad to some, but true to all. The PowerPlay CD has effectively been a barometer of this change. Look back at early issues and then look at the last couple. We're not endorsing this swing to Win 95, what we're doing is simply putting the latest demos on the CD - it just so happens that they're mostly Win 95.

However, we're here to help you, not Microsoft. So from now on we'll be putting many more DOS games on the CD, as well as all the usual feast of new titles.

As for Win 3.1x, it's just about the crappiest games platform you'll ever see, which is why games developers soundly ignored it for all the years it dominated the GUI market. The PowerPlay menu won't work with it and if a game (being run straight from the CD) happens to work with Win 3.1x then it's a great big happy bonus. Praise be to Bill!

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Warlords II

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Even today there really isn't anything that can compare to the big picture Warlords 2 achieved in a multiplayer sphere. Lords of the Realm comes close, but the original rules!

Now this was a game of style. Snazzy graphics, large armies to build and command, specialised units to maim and murder your opponents with and some amazingly impressive random maps to give you endless weeks of sleepless nights.

It was, literally, one of the first games to use the new found SVGA mode that was oft talked about but rarely seen. Its high resolution screens led gamers everywhere to gape in awe and drool hopelessly on their beloved machines as they gazed at the smoothly textured graphics, window system and denizens of the Warlords II universe. The game looked impressive, played impressive and best of all, it was multiplayer impressive all the way, albeit on one machine.

The basic theme, as with most strategy games, was to build one's empire, slowly expand, taking over cities that piqued ones interest and then bash

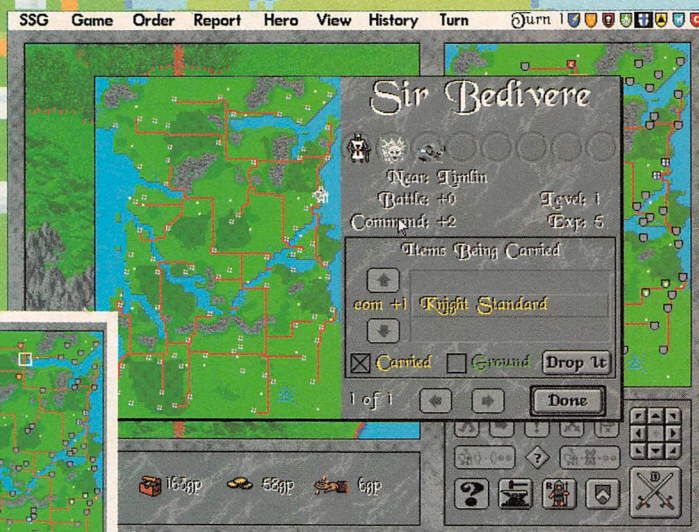


the all that one is able to bash out of one's esteemed enemies. Set in a fantasy, knights-in-shining-armor era production was measured by the number of cities you owned and the gold they produced.



Units were produced at cities, and each on the map had its own combination of weak and powerful unit types. Some cities held special unit types, such as dragons, and angels - and these were the

guys to get. Whole empires could crumble because one player had the



key cities that gave them powerful units.

It was thus in your best interests to conquer these cities for your own use before your enemy did so. Then again, it was also in your best interests to just ignore these cities and try and beat the crap out of your opponents with sheer numbers. Never, ever, underestimate the power of light infantry!

The real heroes of the game however were, well, heroes. A hero was a soldier of special breed who

would only approach you when you had enough raw dosh to tempt their greed. Once hired, they stayed with

you for life and basically traipsed around the landscape killing woodland creatures, razing cities, looting foes and eating picnics in the fast green fields found on every map. Being an all round one man army, they did a good job at killing large groups of enemies but their real power came when you teamed them up with other high end creatures, and if these creatures had the flying ability, your hero could fly around the place hurling insults from the sky and generally being a real pain

just as before, only now in an airborne form.

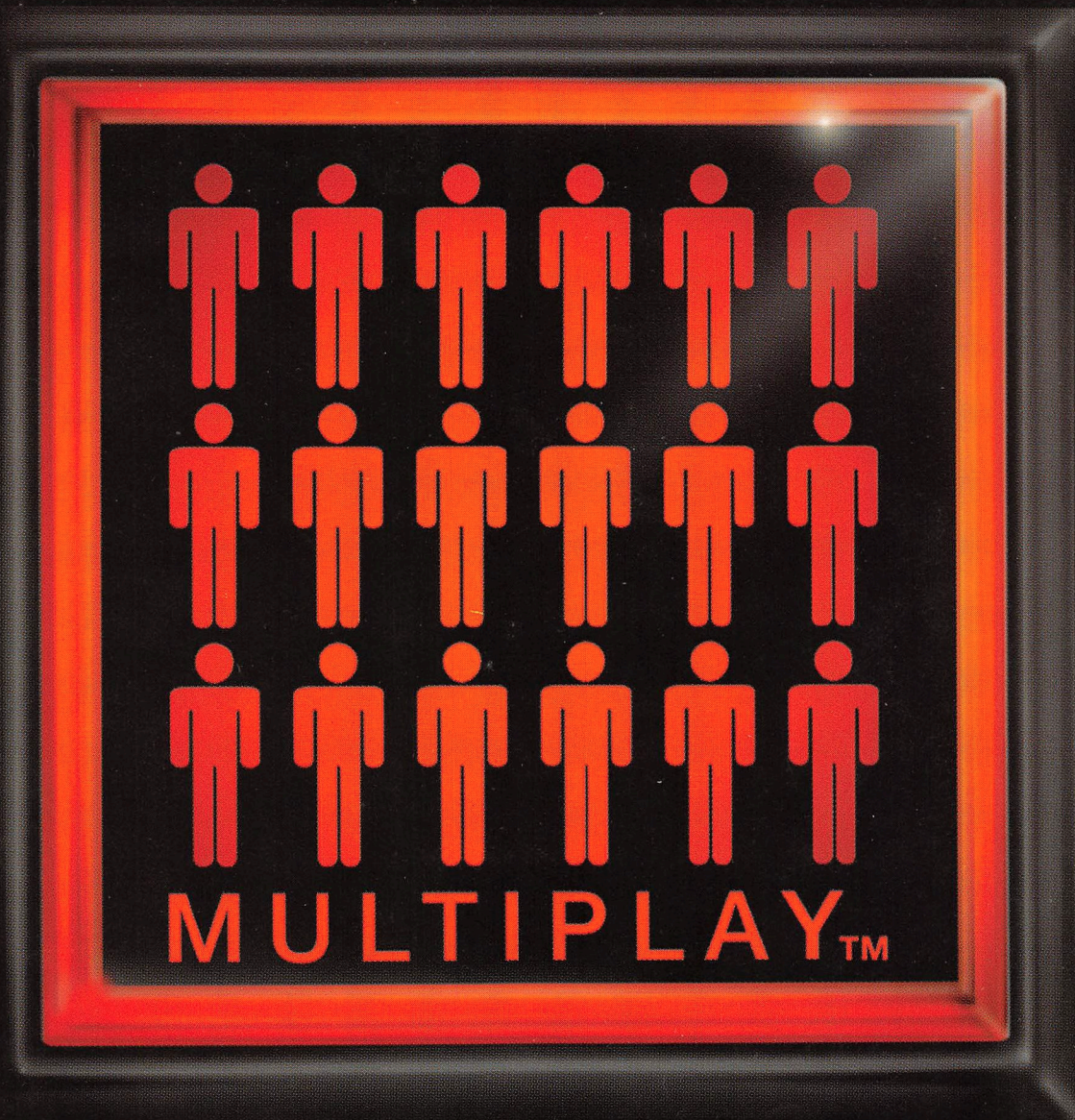
Due to the perilous nature of the hero it was not uncommon for a rookie hero to get creamed trying to take on a powerful beast in a temple, at which there would be heard a cry of anguish and a begging to "reload the game" whilst the other players laughed loudly and said "no!". Trust me, this happened a lot.

With up to eight players and some very impressive big maps, Warlords II saw many a group of friends battle it out over cities, temples (which gave you goodies or quests) and even on the water. Diplomacy was pretty limited from the computer stand point, there being only three states to offer another player; 'I like you', 'I'm neutral, go away' and 'You are a complete and utter bastard, now I'll have to kill you.', and as such diplomacy often involved talking face to face - a dangerous position to be in when it came to fisticuffs on the battlefield.

Warlords II, released by Australia's own SSG, was a game that rapidly grew a cult following. If you search the web you can still find hundreds of campaign maps made by loyal followers. For an all round multiplayer, graphically impressive, strategy game Warlords II is one that will be remembered in the Best Games Ever hall of fame for a very long time.

Ashton Mills





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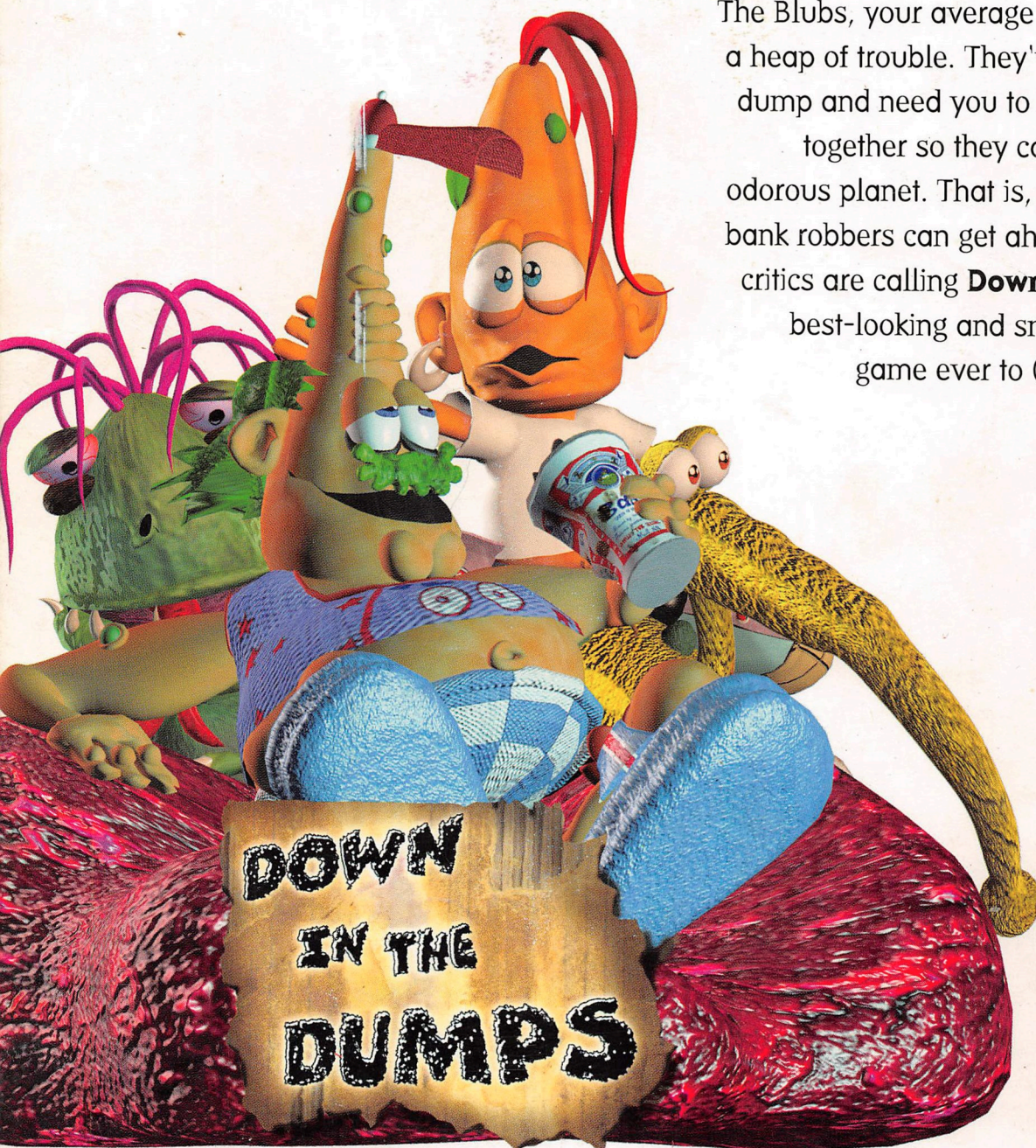
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